

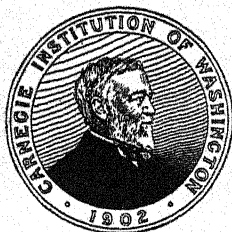
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LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

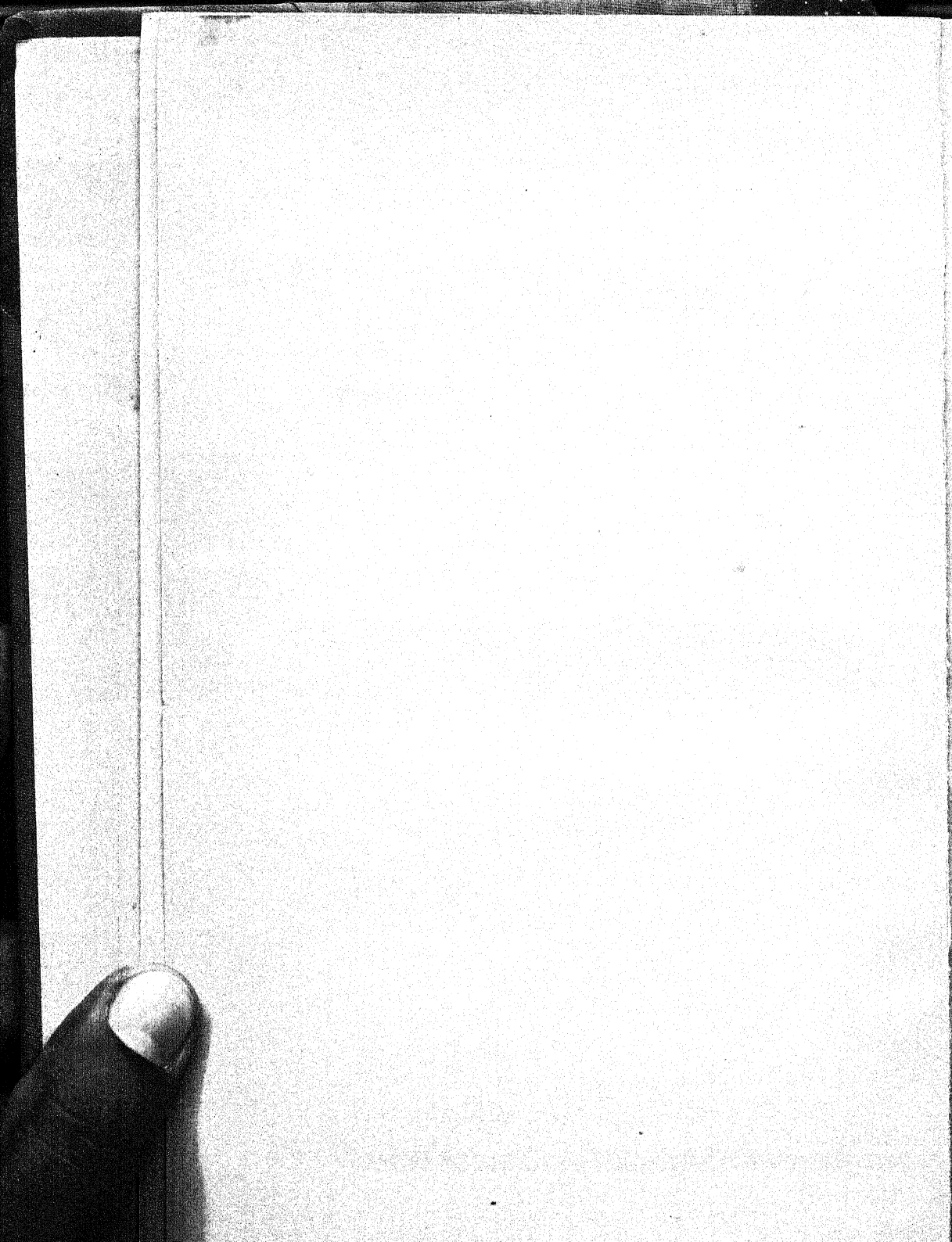
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PART II.
(BOOKS III-V.)



THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON
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LYDGATE'S FALL OF PRINCES

PART II.

BOOKS III.-V.

THE FALL OF PRINCES



BOOK III.

[Prologue.]

LIK a pilgrym which that goth on foote,
And hath non hors to releue his trauaile,
Hot, drie [&] wery, & fynde may no boote
Off welle cold, whan thrust hym doth assaile,
Wyn nor licour, that may to hym auaile,
Riht so fare I, which in my besynesse
No socour fynde my rudnesse to redresse.

[p.144] Like a pilgrim
who goes wearily
on foot and finds
no spring to still
his thirst, so fare
I, knowing no
4 help for my
rudeness.

I meene as thus: I ha[ue] no fressh licour
Out off the conduitis off Calliope,
Nor thoruh Clio in rethorik no flour
In my labour for to refresshe me,
Nor off the sustren, in noubre thries thre,
Which with Cithera on Pernaso duell, —
Thei neuer me gaff drynk onys off ther well!

8 I have no fresh
water from the
fountain of
Calliope, no
flower of speech
from Clio to
refresh my
labour. Not
12 once have I
drunk of the
well on
Parnassus.

Nor off ther sprynges cleer & cristallyne,
That sprang be touchyng off the Pegase,
The fauour lakkith my makyng tenlumyne,
I fynde ther bawme off so gret scarsete,
To tame ther tunnyys with sum drope of plente;
For Poliphemus thoruh his gret blyndnesse
Hath in me dirked off Argus the brihtnesse.

The blindness of
Polyphemus has
16 darkened my
eycs.

Our liff heer short, off wit the gret dulnesse,
The heuy soule troublid with trauaile,
And off memorie* the glacyng brotilnesse, —
Dreed & onkunnyng ha[ue] maad a strong bataile
With werynesse my sperit to assaile,
And with ther subtil crepyng in most queynte
Ha[ue] maad my sperit in makyng for to feynte.

20
Our life here is
short; wit is
dull and memory
untrustworthy.
24 Dread and
Ignorance have
crept in to
weaken my will
to write.

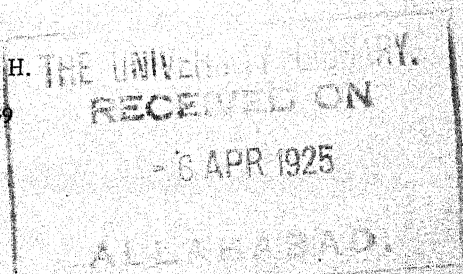
4. welle] wellis H.

7. No] None R.

9. conduitis] conductis R.

17. The] Ther R — makyng] fauour H.

24. off] om. R — memoire B.



and my step-
mother Oblivion
has made a
bastille of forget-
fulness to shadow
my reason and
cause me to lose
my way.

And ouermor, the feerful frowardnesse
Off my stepmooder callid oblyuyoun,
Hath maad a bastille off forgetilnesse,
To stoppe the passage & shadwe my resoun,
That I myht haue no cleer direccioun
In translatyng off newe to quikke me,
Stories to write off old antiquite.

32

Thus I stood
in double doubt,
between the
desire to con-
tinue my work
of translating
and Ignorance,
who halted my
pen.

Thus was I set, and stood in double werre
At the meetyng off feerful weies tweyne.
The ton was this: who-euer list to lere,
Where-as good[e] will gan me constreyne,
Bochas taccomplisshe for to do my peyne,
Cam Ignoraunce with a maas off dreede
Mi penne tarreste; I durst[e] nat proceede.

36

40

When I con-
sidered what I
had undertaken,
my pen quaked
at the thought
that I had almost
abandoned my
task;

Thus be my-selff remembryng on this book,
It to translate how I hadde vndirtake,
Ful pale off cheer, astonyd in my look,
Myn hand gan tremble; my penne I felte quake,
That disespeired, I hadde almost forsake
So gret a labour, dreedful & inportable,
It to parfourme I fond my-silff so onable.

44

48

and when I saw
how little I had
accomplished, I
stood checkmate
for fear, like a
wayfarer over-
taken by night,

Twen the residue off this gret iourne
And litil part theroff that was begunne,
I stood chekmaat for feer whan I gan see
In my weie how litil I hadde runne;
Lik taman that failed day & sunne,
And hadde no liht taccomplisshe his viage,
So ferr I stood a-bak in my passage.

52

56

which came on,
darkened by
ignorance.
I found no one
to help me but
the Pierides and
Medusa, hard
as stone.

The nyht cam on, dirked with ignoraunce,
Mi witt was dull be cleernesse to discerne
In rethorik for lak off suffisaunce,
The torchis out, & queynt was the lanterne.
And in this caas my stile to gouerne,
Me to forthre I fond non other muse
But, hard as ston, Pierides and Meduse.

60

Poverty ap-
proached and
old age: my
purse was
empty, and
Bacchus
far away.

Support was non my dulnesse for to guie;
Pouert approchid; in stal crokid age:
Mercurie absent and Philologie;
Mi purs ay liht and void off al coignage.

64

29. ferdful R. 31. bastille] bataile H, batell R 3.
35. antiquite] auctorite H. 39. gan] can H.
66. Philologie] philosophye H.

Bachus ferr off to glade my corage;
 An ebbe off plente; scarsete atte fulle,
 Which of an old man makth the sperit dulle.

68

But hope & trust to putte away dispair
 Into my mynde off newe gan hem dresse;
 And cheeff off all to make the wethir fair,
 Mi lordis fredam and bounteuos largesse
 Into myn herte brouht in such gladnesse,
 That thoruh releuyng off his benygne grace,
 Fals Indigence list me no mor manace.

72 But hope rose
 again and the
 weather bright-
 ened, when my
 lord's generosity
 brought me
 gladness and
 relief.

76

A, how it is an hertli reioishyng
 To serue a prynce that list to aduertise
 Off ther seruauantis the feithful iust menyng,
 And list conside to guerdone ther seruise.
 And at a neede list hem nat despise,
 But from al daunger that sholde hem noye or greue
 Been euer redi to helpe hem and releue.

80 Ah, it is a
 pleasure to
 serve a prince
 who is ready
 to reward and
 help those who
 are dependent
 upon him!

84

And thus releued be the goodliheed,
 And thoruh the noblesse off this most knyhtli man,
 Alle mystis cleerid off disespier & dreed,
 Trust, hope and feith into myn herte ran;
 And on my labour anon forthwith I gan:
 For be cleer support off my lordis grace,
 Al foreyn lettynge fro me I dede enchace.

[p. 145] The mists of
 despair and
 dread vanished,
 and I forthwith
 began my
 labour.

88

¶ Folkis that vse to make grete viages,
 Which vndirfonge long trauaile & labour,
 Whan thei ha[ue] doon gret part off ther passages,
 Off werynesse tasswagen ther rigour,
 Ageyn feyntise to fynde sum fauour,
 Looke ofte ageyn, parcell to be releued,
 To seen how moch ther iourne is a-cheued.

92 People who
 make long
 journeys or
 undertake
 laborious tasks,
 often look back
 to see how much
 they have
 accomplished,

96

Cause whi thei so ofte looke ageyn,
 Bakward turne look and eek visage,
 Is onli this: that it may be seyn
 To them how moch is doon off ther viage.
 Eek weri folk that gon on pilgrymage
 Reste hem sumwhile a ful large space,
 Laborious soot to wipen from ther face.

100 and weary folk
 who go on
 pilgrimages
 sometimes stop
 to take a long
 rest,

104

69. An] And R.

105. soot] swot H, swet R 3, swete P.

casting down
their heavy
burdens and
drinking at cool
springs and
reckoning up the
miles they have
travelled.

Ther heuy fardell among thei caste down
At certeyn boundis to do ther bakkis ese,
At wellis colde eek off entencioun 108
Drynke fressh watris ther greuou thrust tapese,
Or holsum wyne ther appetit to plesse,
Reknyng the miles be computaciouns,
Which thei ha[ue] passid, off castellis & off touns. 112

It comforts them
to know how
much of their
journey is over;

It doth hem ese the noubre for to knowe
Sithe thei began off many gret iournees,
Off hih[e] moun-teyns and off valis lowe,
And straunge sihtes passyng be cuntrees, 116
Thunkouth bilyng off burwes & citees,
Countyng the distaunce fro toun[e]s & the spacis:
This ther talkyng at ther restyng placis.

and they also
look forward to
see what still lies
before them.

The residue and the surplusage 120
Thei rekne also off ther labour komyng,
Thynke it is a maner auantage
To haue & seen a cleer[e] knowlechyng
Off thynges passid & thynges eek folwyng; 124
For to ther hertis it doth ful gret plesaunce,
Whan al such thyng is put in remembraunce.

Thus did John
Bochas, and he
was astonished
when he con-
sidered the Fall
of Princes from
Fortune's wheel,

And semblabli Iohn Bochas, as I fynde,
Gan turne his bak, look and c[o]untenaunce, 128
And to remembre, apoyntyng in his mynde
To the stories rehersed in substaunce
In his too bookis off sorwe & displesaunce, 132
Hymself astonyd, merueilyng a gret deel
The fall off pryncis fro Fortunys wheel.

knowing that
they had brought
their misfor-
tunes upon
themselves
through excessive
ambition and
covetousness.

Off ther onhapp, as he doth reherce,
Toward hemsilff the cause doth rebounde;
Ther clymyng up the heuenes for to perce, 136
In worldli richesse tencrecen and habounde,
Ther gredi etik doth hemsilff confounde;
And ther thrust off hauyng onstaunchable
Causeth ther noblesse to be so variable. 140

High climbing up
blunts the sight
and causes men
to fall; and those
who covet too
much shall lose
everything.

Hih clymyng up, off resoun who can see,
Dulleth off braynes the memoriall,
Blunteth the sihte, in hih & low degre,
Which from a-loffte makith hem haue a fall. 144

112. 2nd off] om. H.

116. be] the R. 117. burwes] Bourhes R.

118. distauncis H.

143. &] or H.

Men seyn off old, who that coueitith all,
At onset hour suchon shal nat chese,
But al his gadryng attonys he shal lese.

For worldli folk which so hih arise
With the gret peis off worldli habundaunce,
And with the weihte off froward couetise, —
Namli wher Fortune holdeth the ballaunce, —
With onwar turn off sum onhappi chaunce,
This stormy queen, this double fals goddesse,
Plungeth hem down from al ther gret richesse.

148 Fortune is
always ready
to plunge
worldly folk
down from
their riches.

152

Wherefore Bochas heeroff to make a preeff
Sheweth to purpos a sentence ful notable,
A cleer exauple off onwar such myscheeff,
Write off an auctour be maner off a fable,
Al-be the menyng be ful comendable,
And weel accordyng in conclusioun
To the cleer purpos off this entencioun.

156 Therefore
Bochas tells a
fable to shew
how such un-
expected mis-
chief comes.

160

¶ Finis Prologi.

[Incipit liber Tercius]

[How Andalus doctor of Astronomey concludith/
how princys sholdenot atwite constellacions nor
fortune of theire vnhappy fallyng but theire owne
demeritys and vicious lyuyng.]¹

AT Naples whilom, as he doth specefie,
In his youthe whan he to scoole went,
Ther was a doctour off astronomie,
Famous off cunnyng & riht excellent.
Off hym rehersyng, shortli in sentement,
His ioie was most to studyen and to wake;
And he was callid Andalus the blake.
He radde in schoolis the meuyng off the heuene,
The kynde off sterris and constellaciouns,
The cours also off the planetis seuene,
Ther influencis and ther mocaciouns,
And heeld also in his opynyouns,
The fall off pryncis, the cause weel out souht,
Cam off themsilff & off Fortune nouht.

164 When Bochas
went to school
in Naples there
was a doctor of
astronomy called
Andalus the
Black, who
understood the
course of the
stars and be-
lieved that the
Fall of Princes
was caused by
themselves alone
and not by
Fortuna.

172

154. gret] om. R. 156. ful] most H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 60 verso.

He held that
neither the stars
nor heaven are
to blame for
earthly misfor-
tunes,

Nor the sterris wer nothyng to wite,
Be ther meuyng nor be ther influence,
Nor that men sholde off riht the heuene atwite
For no froward worldli violence:
For this clerk ther concluded in sentence,
How men be vertu longe may contune
From hurt off sterris outhur off Fortune.

176

180

of which the chief
occasion is the
viciousness of
men, who have
free choice to
behave either
well or ill.

Ther owne desert is cheeff occasioun
Off the onhap, who-so taketh heede,
And ther demeritis onwarli put hem down,
Whan vicious liff doth ther bridil leede.
Cours off Fortune nor off the sterris rede
Hyndrith nothyng geyn ther felicite,
Sithe off fre chois thei ha[ue] ful liberte.

184

188

God punishes
sin in many
ways; evil-doing
always calls for
retribution.

God punsheth synne in many maner wise;
Summe he chastisith for ther owne auail:
Men may off resoun in such cas deuse,
Synne ay requereth vengauunce at his tail.
God off Fortune taketh no counsail,

192

As for Fortune,
no one is more
independent of
her than Glad
Poverty, as
Andalus used
to say,
relating to his
pupils this fable.

Nor from hir meuyng no man is mor fre,
As clerkis write,* than is Glad Pouerte.

196

And onto purpos, this auctour ful notable,
To his scoleris ther beyng in presence,
Ful demurli gan reherse a fable,
With many a colour off sugred eloquence;
Theron concludyng the summe off his sentence
Touchyng a striff, which he dede expresse,
Atwen Glad Pouert & this blynd godesse.

200

[A disputacion between fortune & glad pouert.]¹

Once Glad
Poverty, who
looked like a
dishevelled,
tattered woman,
sat where three
roads met.

QUOD Andalus: "Whilom off fortune
In a streiht place ther sat Glad Pouerte,
Which resemblid off look & figure
A rekles woman, most ougli on to see,
At a naruh meetyng off hih-weies thre,
Al totorn, to-raggid and to-rent,
A thousend pachchis vpon hir garnement.

204

208

178. atwite] awyte R. 180. concludyng H.

188. Hyndryng R — ther] the R.

196. written B. 203. this] his H.

209. to-raggid] & raggid H.

210. garment R, garmente P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 60 verso.

She was hidous bothe off cheer and face,
 And in semyng void off sorwe and dreed.
 And bi that way as Fortune dede pace,
 And off Glad Pouert sodenli took heed,
 She gan to smyle & lauhhe at hir in deed,
 Bi a maner scornynge in certeyn,
 Off hir array she hadde so gret disdeyn.

212 She was very
 unattractive,
 but without
 sorrow or fear;
 and when
 Fortune hap-
 pened to come
 along and
 caught sight of
 her, Fortune
 216 began to laugh
 at her ragged
 clothes.

Whos froward lauhthe, whan Pouert dede espie
 How she off hir hadde indignacioun,
 She roos hire up off hih malencolie,
 Pleynli to shewe hire entencioun,
 Withoute good day or salutacioun,
 Doyng to Fortune no maner reuerence,
 Vnder these woordis declaryng hir sentence:

At this Poverty
 arose indig-
 nantly, and
 without bidding
 220 Fortune good-
 day said:

¶ 'O thou Fortune, most fool off foolis all,
 What cause hastow for to lauhhe at me,
 Or what disdeyn is in thyn herte fall?
 Spare neueradeel, tell on, lat me see,
 For I ful litil haue a-do with the;
 Off old nor newe I ha[ue] noon aqueyntaunce
 Nouthur with the nor with thi gouernaunce.'

224 "O Fortune,
 greatest of all
 fools, why do
 you laugh at
 me? We have
 very small
 228 acquaintance
 with one
 another."

And whan Fortune beholdeth the maneer
 Off Glad Pouert in hir totorn[e] weede,
 And kneuh also be contenau[n]ce & cheer,
 How she off hire took but litil heede,
 Lik as she hadde to hir no maner neede, —
 The which[e] thynges conceyued and Iseyn,
 To Pouerte she ansuerde thus ageyn:

232 Fortune saw
 that Glad
 Poverty had
 little respect
 for her and
 answered:

¶ 'Mi scornful* lauhthe pleynli was for the,
 Whan I the sauh so megre, pale and leene,
 Nakid and cold, in gret aduersite,
 Scabbid, scuruy, scallid and oncleene
 On bak and body, as it is weel seene.
 Many a beeste walke in ther pasture,
 Which day be day off newe thou doost recure.

236

"I laughed
 when I saw
 240 you so thin
 and pale and
 cold, so scurv
 and unclean.
 You dwell in
 the fields

244

211. She] Scho R.
 228. neueradeel] not adeel J, not a dele P.
 234. know R.
 236. hadde] om. R.
 239. scornful] soruhful B.
 243. and] om. R.

and have nothing to wrap your head in but a piece of old matting. Children run when they see you, and many a dog has gnawed on your staff.

Hauyng nothyng to wrappyn in thyn hed [p. 148]
 Sauff a brod hat, rent out off nattis olde,
 Ful often hungri for defaute off bred, 248
 Slepyn on straw[e] in the frostis colde.
 And wher thou comest, as men may weel beholde,
 For feer off the, childre them withdrawe,
 And many a dogge hath on thi staff ignawe. 252

"You are odious to all men; everybody flees your presence."

To alle estatis thou art most odious,
 Men with the will ha[ue] no daliaunce,
 Thi felaship is so contrarious,
 Wher thou abidest ther may be no plesaunce. 256
 Folk hate so dedli thi froward aqueyntaunce,
 That fynali, I dar conclude off the,
 Wher-euer thou comest thi felaship men fle!

When Glad Poverty saw how rude Fortune was to her, she replied:

Whan Glad Pouert gan pleynli vndirstonde 260
 These rebukes rehersed off Fortune,
 The rud[e] resouns that she took on honde,
 Which frowardli to hire she dede entune,
 As Pouert were a refus in comune, 264
 Bi the repreuis that Fortune on hir laide;
 For which Pouert replied ageyn & saide:

"Fortune, be well certain that I have renounced your favour of my own free will. I would rather be poor and happy than possess great wealth and have no peace of mind."

¶ 'Fortune,' quod she, 'touchyng this debat,
 Which off malice thou doost ageyn me take, 268
 Be weel certeyn, touchyng my poore estat,
 I off fre will thi fauour ha[ue] forsake.
 And thouh folk seyn thou maist men riche make,
 Yit I ha[ue] leuere be poore with gladnesse, 272
 Than with trouble possede gret richesse.

"Although you make a fine appearance and look fat and well fed"

For thouh thou seeme benygne & debonaire
 Bi a maner countirfet apparence,
 Fat & weel fed, with rounde chekis faire, 276
 With many colours off trouthe as in pretence,
 As ther off feith wer werrai existence, —
 But vnder all thi floures off fresshnesse
 The serpent glidith, off chaung & doubilnesse. 280

and wear purple clothes and have many servants and jewels, nevertheless I am quite ready to fight you."

And thouh thi clothyng be of purpil hewe,
 With gret awaityng off many chaumbereris,
 Off gold & perle ech dai chaunges newe,
 Clothes off gold & sondry fressh atiris, 284
 And in thyn houshold ful many officeris, —

Yit I dar weel putte in iupartie,
With the to plete and holde chaumpartie.'

Thus Glad Pouert gan wexen inportune,
Off cheer contraire, off look & off language,
Ageyn this ladi which callid is Fortune,
That off disdeyn she fill into a rage:
¶ 'Behold,' quod she, 'off Pouert the corage,
In wrechidnesse standyng disconsolat,
How ageyn me she is now obstynat!

She cannat see, how she stant outraied,
Fer from the fauour off my felicitye,
Yit off pride she is nat disamaied,
Nor* list nat bowwe for tobeie me,
Thouh she be cast in mendicite,
Ferthest a-bak, I do you weel assure,
In myscheeff set off any creature.

But treuli, Pouert, for al thi truaundise,
Maugre thi pride and thi gret outrage,
I shal the pun[y]she in ful cruel wise,
To make the loute vnder my seruage.
Which resemblist a dedli pale ymage,
That were off newe rise out off his graue,
And yit off pride darst ageyn me raue.'

But whan Fortune hadde these woordis said,
Glad Pouert gan falle in gret gladnesse,
And ageyn Fortune with a sodeyn braid,
She gan hir conceit out shewe & expresse:
¶ 'Fortune,' quod she, 'thouh thou be a goddesse
Callid off foolis, yit lerne this off me,
From thi seruage I stonde at liberte.

But yiff I shal algatis haue a-doo
With the in armis, most cruel & vengable,
Touchyng the quarel that is atwen vs too,
Ther is o thyng to me riht comfortable,
That thi corage is flekeryng & onstable;
And wher an herte is in hymself deuyded,
Victorie in armys for hym is nat prouyded.

288 Fortune then
lost her temper
and said:
"Behold the
presumption of
this wretched
creature, she
cannot

292 see how misera-
ble she is with-
out my favour,
and yet she is
full of pride!

300

304 "Truly, Poverty,
for all your
outrageous con-
ceit, I'll punish
you and make
you bow down
in my service.
You look as if
you had just
risen from the
grave!"

308

312 On hearing this
Glad Poverty re-
joiced and said:
"Fortune, if
fools call you a
goddess, I, at
any rate, am free
from your sub-
jection; and
since we are
going to fight,
it is comforting
to know that
you have no
firmness of
heart.

320

288. Importune R, H. 289. contrary H.

298. Nor] Nar B— for] om. H.

303. gret] om. J.

318. that] which H— atwen] tween J.

"I won't flatter
you, although
flattery is appro-
priate to your
kind: I have
freely forsaken
worldly wealth,

Me list[e] nouthre flatre the nor fage,
Nor the tenoynte be adulacioun,
Thouh flat[e]rie & feyned fals language
Appropriid be to thi condicioun;
And in despit off thi presumpcioun,
I ha[ue] forsake off my fre volunte
All the tresours off worldli vanite.

324
328

and if once
your servant, I
am now emanci-
pated from your
power.

Whilom I was, as thou hast deuised, [p. 149]
Seruant to the, and onto thi tresours;
But fro thi daunger now that I am franchised,
Sekyng off the nouthre helpe nor socours,
Manace kynges & myhti emperours:
For Glad Pouert, late nouthre soone,
With thi richessis hath nothyng to doone.

332
336

"You may hold
worldly princes
and rich
merchants in
subjection,
Glad Poverty
has wholly
escaped your
lure.

For thouh thou haue enbracid in thi cheyne
Worldli pryncis & goodes transitorie,*
And riche marchantis vndir thi demeyne,
Yeuest to knythod conquest and victorie,*
The fadyng palme off laude & veynglorie,* —
But whan echon thi fauour han recurid,
Than is Glad Pouert fre fro thi lure assurid.

340

"All your
servants stand
in fear of your
deceit;
Glad Poverty
alone is free.

All thi seruantis standen vnder dreede,
Quakyng for feer[e] off thi doubilnesse;
For nouthre wisdam, force nor manheede,
Fredam, bounte, loue nor ientillesse
Mai in thi fauour ha[ue] no sekirnesse;
Thei be so possid with wyndis in thi barge,
Wher-as Glad Pouert goth freli at his large.

344
348

"Desiring
nothing, I am
not afraid of
your menaces.

Thi manacyng doth me no duresse,
Which worldli pryncis dredyn euerichon.
Thei may weel quake for losse off gret richesse;
But I, Glad Pouert, theroff desire non,
As flowe & ebbe al worldli thyng mut gon;
For afftir flodis off Fortunys tyde,
The ebbe folweth, & will no man abide.

352
356

324. tonoynte R.

331. onto] to R.

338. transitoires B, R, J, transytoryes H 5, transitories P.

340. victoires B, R, J, victories P, victoryes H 5.

341. veyngloires B, R, J, vainglories P, veyngloryes H 5.

347. gentillesse R, H, gentlenes P. 348. Mai] Man R.

349. wynde R.

355. worldli] erthly H.

Flowe and ebbe be to me bothe aliche;
 I dreede nothyng thi mutabilite,
 Mak whom thou list[e] outhr poore or riche;
 For I nothyng will requere off the,
 Nouthr lordshepe nor gret prosperite:
 For with thi giffes who that hath to doone,
 Off chaunges braideth offter than the moone.

360 "Flow and ebb
 of fortune are
 alike to me.
 Do as you will
 with others; I
 ask nothing of
 you.

Out off pouert cam first these emperours
 That were in Rome crownyd with laurer;
 Fredam & largesse made hem first victours,
 Causyng ther fame to shyne briht and cleer,
 Till couetise brouht hem in daunger,
 Whan thei off foli, in ther most excellence,
 To thi doubilnesse dede reuerence.

364 "The emperors
 of Rome first
 arose out of
 poverty, nor did
 they fall until
 they became
 covetous and
 worshiped you.

For whan fredam a prynce doth forsake,
 And couetise put awei largesse,
 And streihtnesse is into houshold take,
 And negardship exilith ientillesse,
 Than is withdrawe from ther hih noblesse
 The peeplis herte; and, pleyntli to deuise,
 Off ther seruauantis farweel al good seruise.

372 "When a
 prince becomes
 avaricious he
 loses the love of
 his people;

Al such sodeyn chaungis in comune
 In this world vsid now fro day to day,
 Echon thei come be fraude off fals Fortune;
 Experience hath put it at assay,
 Loue, trouthe & feith be gon [so] ferr away.
 And yiff that trust with pryncis wil nat tarie,
 Litol merueile thowh the peeple varie.

376 and sudden
 changes are to be
 expected when
 the honour of
 princes has de-
 parted.

For thoruh thi chaungis off fraudulent fairnesse,
 Ther is now vsid in eueri region
 Glad cheer out shewed with couert doubilnesse,
 Vnder the courtyn off symulacioun.

384 388 "Owing to you,
 people every-
 where dissem-
 ble; there is no
 surety except
 in Glad Poverty.

So secre now is adulacioun,
 That in this world may be no sur[e]te,
 But yiff it reste in Glad Pouerte.

392 "I have no fear
 of your
 froward incon-
 stancy:
 my poor estate
 is quite safe
 from your
 vicissitudes."

Yit off thi perelous froward variaunce
 I sette no stor, treuli as for me;
 For al thi frenship concludeth with myschaunce,
 With sodeyn myscheeff off mutabilite,
 Which yeueth me herte to haue a-do with the:

358. be] om. R. 375. gentliness H.
 383. so] om. J, R. 390. secret H. 397. me] my R.

For suffisaunce in my poore estaat
Shal to thi chaunges seyn sodenli chekmaat.'

When she heard this Fortune was furious.
"Poverty," she said, "if I did not show you my power men would think but little of me."

Fortune almost with anger disespiered,
Off these woordis took ful gret greuaunce.
¶ 'Pouert,' quod she, 'which maist nat been apeired!
But I now shewe ageyn the my puissaunce,
Men wolde litil accounte my substaunce,
O myhti Pouert! O stronge Hercules!
Which ageyn[s] me putttest thi-silff in pres!

"Do you suppose that you can overcome me, O strong Hercules? I, who am called Princess of Conquest and Arms!"

Supposest thou it sholde the auaile,
Outher be force or be hardynesse
To haue a-do with me in bataile,
Which am off conquest & off hih prowesse
In armys callid ladi and pryncesse?
For ther is non so myhti conquerour,
That may preuaile withoute my fauour.'

Poverty replied:
"Although I have neither weapons nor armour, let us see if you dare wrestle with me,

¶ Off these woordis Pouert nothyng afferd, [p. 150]
Ansuerde ageyn, thus pleynli in sentence:
'Thouh heer I ne* haue spere, sheeld nor suerd,
Nor chosen armour to stonden at diffence,
Pollex nor dagger to make resistence,
But bare and naked, anon it shal be seyn,
Wher thou with me darst wrastlen on this pleyn.

under the condition that neither of us shall withdraw, and that the victor may bind the other to obey his will."

Which shal be doon vnder condicioun
That non off vs shal hymself withdrawe,
But stille abide off entencioun,
Till he that venquyshe ordeyned hath a lawe,
Such as hym likith, ageyn[e]s his felawe.
The which[e] lawe shal nat be delaied
To be acomplishid on hym that is outraid.'

At this Fortune began to smile:
"Who shall be judge between us?"

Off whos woordes Fortune ageyn gan smyle,
That Pouert proffred so proudli to assaile.
And vpon this she stynte a litil while,
And to Pouert she putte this opposaile:
¶ 'Who shal,' quod she, 'be iuge off this bataile,
Or yeue a doom iustli atwen vs tweyne
Off this quarell which we shal darreyne?

416. heer I ne] I heer B, R, P. 417. stonde in at R.
420. Wher] Wheper H — on] in R.
424. venquysshith H — haue H.
434. Off] on H, R 3.

I axe also a-nother questioun
 Touchyng thi profre off furious outrage:
 Wher-as thou putttest a condicioun
 And a lawe with ful proud language, —
 Wher shaltow fynden pleggis or hostage
 To keepe the promys which thou doost ordeyne, 440
 Theroff tabide the guerdoun or the payne?

436 "And if I win,
 where will you
 find surety to
 keep your
 promise?"

I meene as thus: yiff ther be set a lawe
 Atween vs too or a condicioun
 Be sur[e]te, which may nat be withdrawe,
 As vnder bond or obligacioun;
 But there is nouthur lawe nor resoun
 May bynde a beggere, yiff it be weel souht,
 Whan it is preued that he hath riht nouht. 448

444 "If a condition
 be set between
 us, how can
 a beggar, who
 has nothing, be
 bound to keep
 it?"

Thi sect off pouert hath a proteccioun
 From all statutis to gon at liberte,
 And from al lawe a pleyn exempcioun:
 Than folweth it, yiff thou bounde the
 To any lawe that may contreuid be,
 It wer fraude, pleynli to endite,
 Which hast riht nouht thi parti to aquite.

452 "Your sect of
 Poverty goes
 free of all law; it
 would be a
 fraud for you
 to bind your-
 self without
 having any
 security."

Thou art so feeble, yiff it cam therto,
 That thou were brouht onto vtraunce,
 For noun power, whan al that wer do,
 Thou sholdist faile to make thi fynauce,
 Bothe destitut off good and off substaunce;
 And sithe no lawe thi persone may coarte,
 It wer foli with suchon to iupart.

456 "And as you are
 destitute, and
 exempt from
 all penalties, it
 were folly to
 have ado with
 you."

Yiff I wolde compulse the to wrak,
 Taxe off the the tresour off kyng Darie,
 On that parti thou stondest ferr abak,
 Mi paiement so longe sholde tarie,
 Indigence wolde make the to varie.

464 "I should have
 to wait a long
 time before I
 got anything out
 of you!"

And yiff I wolde thi persone eek compare
 To Alisandre, — thi sides been ful bare!

468

And fynali thou stondest in such caas
 Off miserie, wrechidnesse and neede,
 That thou myhtest off resoun seyn* allas,
 Bothe forsake off frenshipec & kenreede,
 And ther is non dar plegge the for dreede:

472 "Miserable and
 without friends
 or kin, no one
 would stand
 surety for
 you; yet, like a
 vainglorious
 fool, you expect
 to win."

449. Thi] The P — sect] feet R.

472. seyn] syngen B, syng R, synge J, sing P, say R 3.

473. &] & of H.

Yit lik a fool supprid with veynglorie,
Hopes off me to wynne the victorie.' 476

Said Glad Poverty, "I have no doubt whatever that I shall win. Nor do I ask any pledge of you, except that you will promise to fight to a finish."

¶ Quod Glad Pouert, 'I doute neueradeel
That the victorie* shal passen on my side.
Plegge & hostages, lat hem go farweel!
I axe no mor off al thi grete pride, 480
But to the eende that thou wilt abide.
Plegge thi feith, al-be that sum men* seith,
To truste in Fortune ther is ful litil feith.

"And as I have no security to offer except my body, you can take that and keep it in prison for ever if you have the victory."

And for my part, in this hih emprise, 484
Sithe I ha[ue] pleggis nouter on nor tweyne,
Mor sur hostage can I nat deuise,
But yiff so be the victorie* thou atteyne, 488
Than yelde my bodi bounden in a cheyne,
Perpetueli, lik the condicioun,
With the tabide fettrid in prisoun.'

Fortune laughed more than ever. "It is contrary to nature for a beggar to have such a bold heart!"

Than Fortune louh mor than she dede afforn,
Whan she sauh Pouert so presumptuous; 492
In hir* arrai al ruggid and totorn,
And hadde nouter rente, lond nor hous.
'It is,' quod she, 'a thyng contrarious
Onto nature, who that can aduerte, 496
To a beggere to haue a sturdi herte.

"And if I conquer you, of what use would it be to me to keep your empty belly full in prison?"

And yiff that I the venquissid in bataile, [p.151]
It were to me no worshepe nor auantage,— 500
What sholde thi bodi onto me auaille,
The tenprisowne streihtli in a cage?
It sholde been a charge and a costage,
Thyn empti wombe ech day to fulfill,
Yiff thou myhtest haue* vitaile at thi will! 504

"If I were to lead you in triumph behind my chariot, men would say, 'Look at that fool, who has conquered a beggar!'"

And yiff I wolde my-silff to magnefe,
Tokne off tryumphe afftir my char the leede,
Men wolde deeme it a maner moquerie,
And seyn in scorn: 'tak off that fool good heede, 508
How he a beggere hath ouercome in deede,
Fauht with hym for to encrece his name,
Which conquest turneth to his disclandre & shame!'

478. victoire B. 482. summen B.

483. litil] om. R.

487. victoire B. 493. hir] his B, R, J — ruggid] ragged
R 3, H 5, to ragged P, rogged R.

504. han B.

511. sclandre & diffame R 3.

Yit whan I haue brouht the to vttraunce,
 Mi power shewed and my grete myht,
 And thyn outrage oppressid bi vengauce, —
 Afftir al this, as it is skile and riht,
 It shal be kouth in eueri manys siht,
 Out declarid the gret[e] difference
 Twen thi feblesse* & my gret excellence.

512 "At any rate,
 after I have
 beaten you
 everybody will
 see the great
 difference be-
 tween us, and
 then I'll let
 516 Orcus tear you
 in pieces to shew
 my power."

Than to represe thi surquedie attonys,
 Cruel Orchus, the teidogge infernall,
 Shal reende thi skyn assonder fro thi bonys,
 To shewe my power, which is imperiall,
 And to declare in especiall,
 Pouert recleymed onto Pridis lure,
 With me to plete may no while endure.'

520

524

And sodenli, or Glad Pouert took heed,
 Fortune proudli first began tassaile;
 And onwarli hent hire bi the hed,
 Demyng off pride, that she may nat faile
 Thoruh hir power to venquysshe this bataile.
 But it may falle a dwery in his riht
 Toutraie a geaunt, for al his grete myht.

528

532

With that,
 Fortune sud-
 denly seized
 Glad Poverty by
 the head,

God taketh non heed to power nor to strengthe,
 To hih estaat[e] nor to hih noblesse,
 To squar[e] lemys, forged on breede or lengthe,
 But to quarelis groundid on rihtwisnesse;
 For out off wrong may growe no prowesse.
 For wher that trouthe holdeth chaumpartie,
 God will his cause be grace magnefie.

536

thinking it
 would be easy to
 overcome her.
 But God always
 defends the
 right,

Wherfor Pouert, strong in hir entent,
 Liht and delyu[e]re, auoid off al fatnesse,
 Riht weel brethed, & nothyng corpulent,
 Smal off dieete surfetis to represe,
 Ageyn Fortune proudli gan hir dresse,
 And with an ougli, sterne cruel face,
 Gan in armys hir proudli to embrace.

540

544

and Poverty,
 thin and active,
 with an ugly
 expression on
 her face,

518. febilnesse B, feebilnesse H, feblenesse R.

520. tei dogge R, Teydogge H, tidogge J, tye dogge P, tye-
 dogges R 3.

528. hent] tooke H. 531. dwery] dowri R.

539. God] Gog (*blunder*) R. 543. Dietis H.

545. with] *om.* R.

546. embrace R. H.

grasped Fortune around her corpulent, short-breathed body, Pouert was sclendre & myhte weel endure;
 Fortune was round[e], short off wynd and breth. 548
 And wombes grete oppressid with armure,
 For lak off wynd the grete stuff hem sleth;
 And many a man bryngeth to his deth:
 For ouermekil off any maner thyng 552
 Hath many on brouht to his ondoynge.

(for it is much better to be neither too fat nor too lean, and sufficiency is better than superfluity) A mene is best, with good[e] gouernaunce;
 To mekil is nouht, nor ouer-gret plente:
 Gretter richesse is founde in suffisaunce 556
 Than in the flodis off superfluyte.
 And who is content in his pouerte
 And gruchchith nat, for bittir nor for soote,
 What-euer he be, hath Fortune vndir foote, 560

and lifted her up in the air, Coueitise put hym in no dispeir, —
 Wherfor Pouert, off herte glad and liht,
 Leffte Fortune ful hih up in the heir,
 And hir constreyned off verai force & myht. 564
 For Glad Pouert off custum and off riht,
 Whan any trouble ageyn hir doth begynne,
 Ay off Fortune the laurer she doth wyne.

and, throwing her down, gave her such a blow over the heart with her sharp knee, ¶ Maugre Fortune, in the hair alofte 568
 Constreyned she was be Wilful Pouerte,
 That to the erthe hir fal was ful onsoffte:
 For off Pouert the bony sharp[e] kne,
 Sclendre and long & leene vpon to see, 572
 Hitte Fortune with so gret a myht
 Ageyn the herte, she myht nat stande vpriht:

that she could not rise. (Poverty in contentment always holds Fortune in subjection; To signefie that Pouert with gladnesse,
 Which is content with smal possessioun 576
 And geueth no fors off tresour nor richesse,
 Hath ouer Fortune the dominacioun,
 And kepith hir euer vnder subieccioun,
 Wher worldli folk, with ther riche appaile, 580
 Lyue euer in dreed Fortune wolde faile.

poor men can sing before thieves; it is the rich man who is afraid.) The poore man affor the theeff doth syng [p. 152]
 Vnder the wodis with fresh notis shrille;
 The riche man, ful feerful off robbynge, 584

553. ondoynge] endyng R. 3.

568. alofte] of lotte R. 570. hir] his R.

583. woode H.

Quakyng for dreed[e], rideth foorth ful stille.
 The poore at large goth wher hym list at wille,
 Strongli fraunchised from al debat and striff;
 The riche afferd alwei to lese his liff.

588

Thus Glad Pouert hath the palme Iwonne, —
 Fortune outraied, for al hir doubilnesse.
 Vpon whom Pouert in haste is ronne,
 And streyned hir with so gret duresse,
 Till she confessid & pleynli dede expresse
 With feith & hand, in al hir gret[e] peyne,
 Tabide what lawe Pouert list ordeyne.

592

Thus Glad
 Poverty won
 the battle and
 punished
 Fortune so
 severely, that
 she promised

And in haste afftir this disconfiture,
 Fortune began to compleyne sore.
 But Glad Pouert, which all thyng myhte endure,
 Charged Fortune scornen hire no more.
 For it was said[e] sithen go ful yore,
 He that reioishith to scorne folk in veyn,
 Whan he wer lothest shal scorned been ageyn.

596

to submit to
 whatever
 penalty Poverty
 imposed on her.

'Yit,' quod Pouert, 'thouh thou were despitous,
 Woodis rehersyng which wer nat faire,
 Straunge rebukis ful contrarious,
 And repreuys many thousand paire,
 Thou shalt me fynde ageynward debonaire:
 For thouh a tunge be sclandrous & vengable,
 To sclandre ageyn is nothyng comendable.

600

604

"You must not
 scorn me any
 more," said
 Poverty, "but
 even if you
 did, I would be
 pleasant to you,
 and, in con-
 formity with our
 agreement,

608

Thou must considre, touchyng our bataile
 The ordynance and imposicioun,
 That which off vs in conquest do preuaile
 To brynge his felawe to subieccioun,
 He shal obeie the statut off resoun,
 And acomplisse, off verai due dette,
 What lawe the victour list vpon hym sette.

612

616

For which thou shalt the said[e] lawe obeie,
 With circumstaunces off the condicioun
 Bi me ordeyned, and nothyng ageyn seie, —
 Make no gruchchyng nor replicacioun.
 Considred first the fals opynyoun
 Off hem that seyn, al worldli auenture
 Off good and badde abide vnder thi cure, —

620

you must do
 what I com-
 mand with-
 out grumbling.

598. all thyng] *om.* R.

616. vpon] on H — to sette H.

"So, considering
the erroneous
idea that all
worldly chance is
under your
control, I shall
take Unhappy
Adventure from
your power.

Summe poetis and philisophres also
Wolde in this caas make the a goddesse,
Which be deceyued, I dar seyn, bothe too;
And ther errour and foli to redresse,
I shal withdrawe in verai sekirnesse
Onhappi Auenture away fro thi power,
That she no mor shal stonde in thi daunger.

624

628

"You will have
to bind her to a
stake where
everybody can
see her and
know that only
those who want
her need take
her with them.

This lawe off newe vpon the I make,
That first thou shalt, al open in sum pleyn,
Euel Auenture bynden to a stake,
Or to sum peler wher she mai be seyn,
To shewe exauple to folkis in certeyn,
That no man shal loosne hire nor discharge,
But such as list with hire to gon at large.

632

636

"And you shall
harm no men
but the fools
who trust in
you."

Heeroff to make a declaracioun,
Touchyng thi myht off Euel Auenture,
Thou shalt forgon thi dominacioun
To hyndre or harme any creature,
But onli foolis, which in thi myht assure.
Thei off ther foli may feelee gret damage,
Nat off thi power, but off ther owne outrage.'

640

644

Such wilful
wretches who
unbind Unhappy
Adventure and
call her a
goddess

For thilke foolis, which that list onbynde
This wrechche callid Onhappi Auenture,
Off witt & resoun thei make hemseluene blynde,
Lich as the world stood in Fortunys cure,
As thouth she myhte assure hem & onsure,
And hem dispose to welthe or wrechchidnesse, —
In ther errour hir callyng a goddesse!

648

are blind
to God's
having given us
free choice of
good and evil.

Such wilful wrechchis that hemsilff betake
To putte ther fredam in hir subieccioun,
Off God aboute the power thei forsake,
And hem submitte, ageyn[e]s al resoun,
Vnder Fortunis transmutacioun,
Ther liberte ful falsli for to thrall,
Namli whan thei a goddesse list hir call.

652

656

With a dirk myst off variacioun
Fortune hath cloudid ther cleer natural liht,
And ouershadwed ther discrecioun,
That thei be blent in ther inward siht
For to conside and to beholde ariht,

660

How God aboue put vnder mannys cure 664
Fre chois off good, his resoun to assure.

The Lord enlumyned off his bounteous
largesse [p. 153] 668
With mynde and witt his memoriall,
Toward al vertu his steppis for to dresse,
Endued his resoun for to be naturall,
Off frowardnesse till he wex bestiall,
To bynde hymself contrariousli in deede
To serue Fortune, atwixen hope and dreede. 672

God gave man Reason as a guide for his footsteps towards virtue; but he became irrational out of frowardness, and bound himself to Fortune,

Thus bestiall folk made hire a goddesse,
Falsli wenyng she myhte hem most auaille
With hir plentes off habundant richesse;
And summe demen in ther supposale, 676
With onwar chaung she dar the grete assaile,
Whos trust[e] alwei medlid is with trouble,
And hir plesaunce includith menyng double.

making her a goddess in the false belief that she could help him.

And summe afferme that she mai auaunce 680
Conquestis grete and disconfitures,
And how [it] lith also in hir puissaunce
To forthre & hyndre all maner creatures,
And calle hir pryncesse off fatal auentures, 684
The riche tenhaunce be roial apparaile,
And be disdeyn to hyndre the poraile.

Some people claim that she can give victory and further or hinder all creatures.

Whan she maketh most fulsumli hir profres,
Hir blaundisshyng is farsid with falsheed; 688
Whan hir richessis be stuffid up in coffres,
Thei been ay shet vnder a lok off dreed.
Wherefore, ye riche, off o thyng takith heed,
As your gadryng cam in with plesaunce, 692
Riht so your losse departeth with myschaunce.

When she promises most, her flattery is stuffed with lies; when her wealth is piled up in chests, they are closed with a lock of dread.

Your gredi thrust tresour to multeplie
Causith an etik off nounsuffisaunce,
In you engendryng a fals ydropisie, 696
With a sharp hunger off worldli habundaunce,
Makyng off you a maner resemblaunce

Therefore, you rich, fearing loss, your greed only engenders a fever for more wealth, and you are very much like Tantalus.

666. his] *om.* P — illumyned R.

669. *is transposed with 670 and 671, and blunder indicated by letters a and b R.* 672. *is misplaced at foot of column R.*

678. *is medlid H.* 682. *how] om. R.*

684. *fatal] al maner R.* 691. *ye] the R.*

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ALLAHABAD.

With Tantalus, — whan ye deppest synke,
Than is your nature most thrustleuh for to drynke. 700

Whoever climbs
highest on
Fortuna's wheel
falls when he
least expects it;
but the poor are
exempt from
such changes.

Who clymbeth hiest on Fortunys wheel
And sodenli to richesse* doth ascende,
An onwar turn, afforn seyn neueradeel,
Whan he leest wenyth makith hym descende. 704
Fro such chaungis, who may hymselff defende,
But thei that be with Pouert nat dismaied,
And can with litil holde hemsilff appaied."

[How kyng hostilius worshipping fals goddis/ was
consumpt with firy Levene.]¹

While
Bochas was
thinking over
this matter,
princes who were
once famous in
Italy came to
him bewailing
their fall.

AND whil Bochas gan muse in this mateer, 708
Considred first al worldli thyng mut faile,
With wepyng eien [to hym] ther dede appeer
Pryncis that whilom wer famous in Itaile,
Which gan ther fall ful pitousli bewaile: 712
For mor contrarie* was ther fallyng lowe,
That thei toforn hadde [of] no myscheeff knowe.

Adversity is
harder for a
prince to bear
than a poor
wretch who has
always lived in
discomfort.

For mor vnkouth is thilke aduersite,
Namli to pryncis, whan it is sodeyne, 716
Which euer ha lyued in prosperite,
Hauyng on Fortune no mater to compleyne,
Than off a wrechche, that lyueth ay in peyne, —
Off custom causeth, conceyued the sentence, 720
Off ioie and sorwe a ful gret difference.

The remem-
brance of past
joy trebles their
pain;

Off ioie passid the newe remembraunce,
Whan folk be falle from ther felicite,
In treble wise it doth hem gret greuaunce; 724
Thonwar turn from ther tranquillite,
Thonsur trust and mutabilite
In worldli power, which that thei ha[ue] founde,
Onto ther hertis yeueth a greuous wounde. 728

but a man who
has always
known want is
proof against
misfortune.

But a wrechche, which in wrechchidnesse
Hath euer lyued, and neuer was partable
Off no weelfare nor off welfulnesse,

700. your nature is R — for] *om.* R.

702. riches B, richessis J.

708. in] on H — mateer] maner R.

710. to hym] *om.* J, R. 713. contraire B. 714. of] *om.* J, R.

731. 2nd off] of no H — wealthfulness P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 63 recto.

Nor neuer fo[u]nd[e] Fortune fauourable, —
His sorwe, his myscheeff been so custumable,
That off his peynys long contynuaunce
Doth to his greuys a maner allegaunce.

732

But to pryncis, which sat so hih aloffte,
A sodeyn fall is most contrarious,
And ther descendyng weel the more onsoffte,
In ther tryumphes that thei wer glorious.
Record I take off kyng Hostilius,
Which in Rome from his roial stalle,
Whan he sat crownyd, most sodenli is falle.

736 That princes
suffer greatly is
shewn by the
fall of King
Hostilius of
Rome,

740

It is remembrid off old and nat off newe,
Off al Rome that he was lord and sire;
The firste off kynges that wered purpil hewe,
And off that cite gouerned the empire,
Hadde off Fortune al that hym list desire,
Till that he fill, in all his regalie,
Into a froward dedli maladie.

the first king
who wore
purple, and
744 who had every-
thing he desired
until he became
ill.

748

And off his peynes to fynden allegaunce,
To the temples he wente on pilgrymage,
His offryng made with deuout obeisaunce,
Wherbi sumdeel his peynes gan asswage;
And when he was restored off corage,
Felt hymself[e] that he dede amende,
To comoun proffit ageyn he gan entende.

[p. 154] He grew better
after he had
made a devout
pilgrimage to
752 the temples of
his country,

756

Vpon Thalbanys, regnyng in his glorie,*
To gret auail off Rome the cite,
Thoruh his knyhtod he hadde a gret victorie,
Afftir the which, be ful gret cruelte,
He beraffte hem fraunchise and liberte,
And made hem afftir, thoruh his hih renoun,
To been to Rome vnder subieccioun.

and was
victorious over
the Albans.

760

Afftir this conquest, the stori doth deuyse,
In his noblesse ful staatli and roial,
He gan make a riche sacrifice
To queeme and pleser for a memorial,
Affter the rihtes cerymonyal,

764 After this
victory he made
a rich sacrifice
to Jupiter,

768

746. the empire] he thempire R.

757. Talbanys R — gloire B.

759. victoire B.

764. this] his R.

To Iubiter, be ful gret reuerence,
Aforne his auteres with fires & encence.

but unfortunately
did something
wrong, and so
enraged the gods
that they con-
sumed him with
lightning.

But for that he in his inward entent,
Be circumstaunces off his oblacioun, 772
Was rechles founde and also negligent,
Be sum froward fals affecciou, 776
The goddis kauhte an indignacioun;
And sodenli descendyng from the heuene,
He was consumpt with a firi leuene, —

His false gods,
Jupiter, Saturn
and Venus,
were unable to
help him. All
Christians should
defy such
niffraff

His false goddis myhte hym nat auaille,
Iubiter, Saturnus nor Venus. 780
Lat al *Christene* defie such rascaile;
For to our feith thei be contrarious.
And among goddis, a thyng most outraious,
Ys, whan that pryncis, blent in ther folie,
List ertheli thynges falsli deifie. 784

and never
worship
earthly things,
for it is odious
to God.

For onto God is hatful and odible
A withdrawyng off his reuerence,
To magnefie thynges coruptible
With ondue honour, be fals concupiscence. 788
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, beth war, off hih prudence,
List God onwarli pun[y]she your noblesse,
Maak you in erthe no fals god nor goddesse.

[How Anchus kyng of Rome was moordred by
Lucynyo, bi thassent of his wiff.]¹

Ancus Marcius
succeeded to
Hostilius, and
was murdered
with the consent
of his wife,

THYNKITH on Anchus, kyng off Rome toun, 792
Which was so noble shynyng in his glorie,
Wered a crowne, ful famous off renoun,
Next Hostilius, as put is in memorie, 796
Wan the palme off many gret victorie;
But for al that, with a ful sharp[e] knyff
He moordred was bassentyng off his wyff.

whom he greatly
loved, blind to
her falsenes;
for she coveted
his riches.

He loued hir best aboue ech créature,
Considred nat hir flatrie nor falsnesse, 800
Hir double menyng vnder couerture
Falsli blent this pryncis worthypesse.
To robbe and reue hym off his gret richesse

770] Afore his auctirs *with* fiere & ensence R.

777. firi] fiere R.

783. Ys] Ye R. 785. is] it is H. 788. be] *with* R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 63 verso.

Was hir labour, with countirfet plesaunce,
In hir entent to brynge hym to myschaunce.

804

This Anchus hadde a gret affeccioun,
Onto his goddis to make sacrificises,
And to augmente the religioun
Off paganysme, maad in sundri wises.
Thoruh his manhod and circumspect deuyses,
Vpon Latynes, rebel to his cite,
For comoun profit he made a gret arme.

808

Ancus was a
devout pagan
and defeated the
Latins

Oon off ther cites, callid Politorie,
He knyhtli wan, maugre al ther myht;
And whan he hadde off hem ful victorie,
He abod no lenger, but anon foorth ryht
Made al the peepel, in eueri mannys siht,
As prisoneris, this Romainn champioun,
Be brouht aforn hym bounde into the toun.

812

and brought
many of
thern prisoners
to Rome.

816

Eek, as I fynde, this Anchus nolde cese,
For comoun proffit in his affeccioun,
Ther teritories taugmenten and encrese
In all the cuntres abouten environ
Toward the ryuer wher Tibre renneth doun;
At which[e] place he leet[e] edefie
A ful strong cite, which callid is Ostie.

820

He was always
busy to increase
the territories of
Rome, and built
Ostia.

824

But natwithstandyng al his worthynesse,
He was depnyed, the story tellith so,
Off his kyngdam and his gret richesse
Bi a foreyn callid Lucynyo.
His wiff Tarquild assentid was therto,
Bi whos outrage and gredi couetise
Anchus was moordred in ful cruel wise.

828

Nevertheless he
was murdered
by an alien
named Lucinio.

832

[How Lucynyo that mordred Anchus was affir
mordred.]¹

THUS fro the wheel of Fortune he is fall; [p. 155]
Lucynio in Rome is crownd kyng,
And the Romainys affir dede hym call
Tarquyn the olde, be record off writyng.

836

Lucinio
obtained the
crown
through
his fraud and
eloquence

813. ther] the R — pylitorie R. 821. his] this R.

822. encrese] crese R. 824. wher] om. H.

830. Lucimyo H. 831. Tanquild R.

833. in ful cruel wise] as ye have herd devise H, R 3, H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 recto.

Which hath atteyned, be fraudulent werkyng,
 And bi his subtil forged eloquence
 Onto thestat off roial excellence.

840

and entertained
 the people with
 jousts and was
 the first king to
 institute
 taverns.

He first ordeyned in his estat roial
 Turneis, iustes in castell[s] and cites,
 And other pleies callid marcial,
 With many famous gret solempnites,

844

Sessiouns for statis and degrees.
 This Tarquyn eek, was first that dede his peyne
 In open stretis tauernys to ordeyne.

He was also the
 first to wall
 Rome and to
 build towers for
 defence. He
 conquered the
 Sabines and
 married
 Tanaquil.

Eek to preserue his cite out off doubte,
 Yiff ther enmyes list them to assaile,
 He was the first that wallid Rome aboute
 With myhti tours, onlikli for to faile,
 And hadde also many strong bataile
 With the Sabyne in ther rebelloun,
 And made hem subiect onto Rome toun.

848

But for he was assentid to depryue
 Worthi Anchus from his estat roial,
 And afftir that took Tarquyld [on]to wyue,
 Which slouh hir lord be tresoun ful mortal,
 God wolde off riht that he sholde haue a fal:
 The Lord wil nat, which euery thyng may see,
 Suffre moordre longe to be secre.

856

860

God would not
 allow such a man
 to prosper, so he
 was slain by
 two shepherds

For Lucynio, for his gret offence,
 Touchyng the moordre off the kyng Anchus,
 Islay[e]n was be sodeyn violence
 Off too shepperdis, the stori tellith thus,
 Which off entent[e] wer contrarious
 Atwen hemsilff[e] be a feyned striff,
 To fynde a weie to reue hym off his liff.

864

868

who came before
 him on the
 pretence of a
 quarrel and then
 fell on him with
 an axe.

For whil the kyng sat in iugement
 Upon ther quarel for to do iustise,
 Ful sodenli, thei beyng off assent,
 Fill vpon hym in ful cruel wise,
 And with an ax, the story doth deuise,
 Oon off hem, or any man took heed,
 On too parties roff the kynges hed.

872

854. subiect] sogettis H.

857. tanquyld J, Tanaquil P, Tanquile H 5.

860. euery] euerz R.

870. quarellis H.

This thyng was doon bi the procuryng
 Off too childre, sonys to Anchus,
 Which were exilid be fals compassyng
 Off Lucinio, ageyn hem most irous, —
 To hym ther presence was so odious.
 But thei hem shoop, thouth thei were out off siht,
 Ther fadres deth tauengn yiff thei myht.

876 This was done
 by the in-
 stigatyon of
 Ancus'
 children,
 whom Lucinio
 had exiled.

880

For off nature blood will vengid be,
 To recompense the wrong off his kynreede,
 In this chapitle, lik as ye may see,
 Blood shad for blood: thus bothe dede bleede.
 Be which exauple, lat pryncis taken heede,
 How moordre doon for supplantacioun*
 Requereth vengauce for his fynal guerdoun.

884 Blood will be
 avenged, as you
 may see in this
 chapter. Let
 princes remem-
 ber this.

888

[Lenvoye.]

THIS tragedie be cleer inspeccioun
 Openli declareth in substaunce,
 How slauhtre of princis causith subuersioun
 Off rewmys, cites put out off ordynaunce,
 Off mortal werre long contynuaunce.
 Blood be supplantyng* shad off kynges tweyne,
 Bexauple heer shewed, fals moordre to restreyne, 896

892 This tragedy
 plainly declares
 that the
 slaughter of
 princes causes
 war and sub-
 version and cries
 always
 vengeance.

The fyn declaryng off moordre & fals tresoun:
 The deede horrible crieth ay vengauce
 To God aboue to caste his eien doun,
 To punshe this synne thõruh his myhti puissaunce; 900
 For it is mooder off myscheeff & myschaunce.
 Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth sum lawe ordeyne,
 Withynne your boundis thre vices to restreyne:

The vice off sclaunder, moordre and poison.
 Wher-euer these thre hauen aqueyntaunce,
 Thei brynge in sorwe and desolacioun,
 Put at a preeff be newe remembraunce
 Off falsheed vsed vnder fair cuntenaunce.
 Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth your besi payne,
 Withynne your boundis these vices to restreyne.

904 Wherefore,
 Princes, see that
 the evils of
 slander, murder
 and poison, and
 the sorrow and
 desolation they
 bring are re-
 strained in your
 realms.

908

888. subplantacioun B.

895. subplantyng B.

900. thõruh] by H.

God defend
England from
slander, that
slays good fame,
and from murder
and poison: no
punishment is
too severe for
them.

God diffende this noble regioun
With these thre vices to haue* alliaunce: 912
For slaundre first deuoureth hih renoun,
And sleth good fame thoruh fals dalliaunce.
Harm doon, to late folweth repentaunce,
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, doth a lawe ordeyne 916
To punshe ther malice, fals tungenes to restreyne.
God hath off moordre abhominacioun, [p. 156]
And fals poisoun doth to hym displeaunce;
Ther is no peyen* in comparisoun 920
Condigne to moordre, peised in ballaunce.
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, makith an ordynaunce,
Withynne your boundis off sum dedli peyne
Bi du[e] punishyng fals moordre to restreyne. 924

Princes, let
death be the
final reward of
these vices.

O noble Pryncis, prouydeth off resoun
Ageyn these vices to make purueiaunce,
Off rigour sheweth due execucioun
With al your labour & your hertli instaunce. 928
Lat deth be guerdoun for ther fynal penaunce,
To warne all othre, be constreynt off ther peyne,
Fro these thre vices ther corages to restreyne.

[How for the offence don to Lucrece by Tarquyn
was never aftir crowned kyng in Rome.]¹

Tarquyn the Old
and his family
long dominated
Rome, until the
time of the Rape
of Lucrece.
Then the name
of king came to
an end.

TOUCHING this Tarquyn, of whom I now[e] 932
tolde,
As myn auctour maketh menciou[n],
He callid was Tarquinius the olde,
Which longe in Rome hadde dominacioun,
Till his kynreede and generacioun, 936
For thoffence doon onto Lucrece,
Caused off kynges the name [for] to cese.

Old Tarquin's
son was called
Tarquin the
Proud for his evil
life.

For his sone, which afftir gan succeede,
For his outrages and his extorsions, 940
And for many a-nother cruel deede,

911. this] the R. 912. thre vices] regions R — haue]
hauen B.

913-15 are replaced by 904-6 R. 917. ther] the R.

920. peyne B. 924. punishyng P.

932. I nowe] riht now I H.

933. There is a contraction sign for ur over the u in auctour B.

934. Tarquinius R. 936. Till] Al H. 937. onto] to H.

938. for] om. R, J, P — names P. 939. sone] sony R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 verso.

For his haatful vsurpaciouns,
His froward liif and fals condiciouns,
Among the peeple, bothe stille and loude,
He callid was Tarquinius the proude.

944

Ful obstynat he was in his entent,
Ambicious tacroche gret richesse,
Till that Fortune wex inpacient
Ageyn[e]s hym, in al his gret noblesse.
Gan hir snares and hir crokes dresse,
Thouhte she wolde, but he kept hym weel,
Al sodenli cast hym from hir wheel.

952

A sone he hadde, ful vicious, as I fynde,
To all vertu most contrarious —
To be froward it cam to hym off kynde —
And off nature proud and despitous,
Ageyn the peeple fell and malicious,
Nat louyd but drad; for tyrannye off riht
Is thyng most hatid in the peeplis siht.

956

This proude Tarquyn, the story is weel kouth,
Ageyn Lucrece dede a gret outrage,
Oppressid hir beute in his onbridled youth,
Hir trouthe assailyn in a furious rage.
For which his fader, he, and his lynage
Exilid wern, and for this hatful thyng
Ther was neuer afftir in Rome crownyd kyng.

960

who outraged
Lucrece; and for
that deed he and
his father and
all their kin
were exiled.

Hir bodi corrupt, she cleene off herte & thouht,
Be force assailed was hir innocence,
Oppressid hir beute, but hir sperit nouht,
Hir chaast[e] will dede non offence;
But entred is into hir conscience
A gret remors, for al hir wiifi trouthe,
To slen hirsilff, which was to gret a route.

964

And for that Bochas remembreth pitousli
Hir dedli sorwe and lamentacioun,
Writ hir compleynt in ordre ceriousli,
Which that she made for hir oppressioun,
I folwe muste and make mencion,
Afftir myn auctour parcel rehersyng,
Touchyng hir woordis said in hir deieng.

968

Although
Lucrece's chaste
will did no
offence, she slew
herself for re-
morse;

972

976

and as Bochas
wrote her dying
complaint, so
must I,

980

945. Terquinius R.

948. Impacient R, H. 959. peeple R. 963. Hir] His R.

980. 1st hir] be H.

even if I have
already told
something
of it by
bidding of my
lord.

Al-be-it so, be biddying off my lord,
Rehersed haue in my translacioun
Afftir Pierius heer and ther a woord
Off a ful doolful declamacioun
Be hym remembred off entencioun,
For hir sake men myhte seen and rede
What wifli trouthe was in hir womanheede.

984

I cannot follow
John Bochas'
eloquence, but I
will give you the
substance of his
writing.

And Iohn Bochas list nat sette a-side,
But that he wolde rehersen in sentence
Hir woful compleynt, & therupon abide,
Off wrongis doon onto hir innocence.
And thouh I cannat folwe his eloquence,
I shal sue the trouthe off rehersyng
As in substaunce theeffect off his writyng.

988

The morning
after the foul
deed, Lucrece
arose, and with a
deadly pale face
dressed herself
in funereal black

¶ The morwe next afftir this foule deede,
Lucrece vproos with a ful dedli cheer.
Out off hir face gon was al the rede,
And dirked wern hir heuenli eien cleer,
Al clad in blak[e] afftir the maneer
Off thilke folk which in especiall
Ar wont to gon to feestis funerall.

996

and said to her
husband, father
and assembled
friends,

All hir freendis beyng in presence,
Husbonde, fader, with other eek also,
Bi and bi rehersyng in sentence
The circumstaunces off hir hertli wo.
And or that I any ferther go,
Vnder hope my lord will me supporte,
What that she saide I will to you reporte.

[p. 157]

1004

1008

[The greuous compleynt of Lucrece vpon hir oppres-
sioun.] ¹

"My lord, since
I, Lucrece, am
joined to you in
marriage as your
humble subject,

"FOR-ASMOCHE," quod she, "as I Lucrece
Am be the lawe ioyned in mariage
To the, my lord, whos loue shal ay encrece
Towardis the, with al the surplusage
Off wifli trouthe tenduren al myn age,
As humble subiect with feithful obeisaunce
Vnder thi lordshipe and thi gouernaunce,

1012

983. Piernis R, Pieryns H, Pierins J, pyernus R 3, pyrtus H 5,
Pierius P. 986. hir] his H.

991. onto] to R. 996. dedli] dooleful H. 997. hir] his R.
999. Al] And R. 1000. folk] om. R. 1006. any] may R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 64 verso.

O Colatyn, my lord and trewe husbonde,
 Best beloued off hool affeccoun,
 I will no mor no quarell take on honde
 Nor in no wise make non accioun,
 Withoute that thou list enclyne doun
 Goodli thyn eris to yiue me audience
 To that I shall reherse in thi presence.

1016 O best beloved
 Collatine, I will
 take no action
 until you have
 heard my story.

1020

Iniurie doon or any maner wrong
 Ageyn my worshepe or myn honeste,
 Bi the lawe my sentence is maad strong,
 It touchet[h] you also weel as me,
 I am so hooli yolden onto the, —
 Thou art myn hed, who cleerli can discerne,
 Lord and husbonde my bodi to gouerne.

1024 "Injury done to
 my honesty
 touches you as
 well as me.

1028

Parcial causes in sooth ther may non be
 Atwen vs tweyne nor no disseueraunce:
 For soote and bittir, ioie and aduersite,
 We must hem weie bothe in o balaunce,
 Countirpeise our sorwes [&] our plesaunce,
 Entirmedle all thyng that is in doubte,
 Receyue our fortune as it komth aboute.

1032 There may be
 no sundering of
 our joy and
 adversity: we
 must weigh
 them both in one
 balance;

1036

Ther may atwen vs be no menyng double,
 But oon herte, o will and o corage.
 And as [a] woman that stondeh now in trouble,
 Withoute polishyng off any fair language,
 I mut disclose to you the gret outrage
 Doon onto me, and pleykli it discure,
 Which to redresse lith hooli in your cure.

1040 and as no deceit
 can be between
 us, I must
 frankly disclose
 to you my
 outrage, which
 it lies in your
 power to
 redress.

For the mater, to speke in woordes pleyne,
 A-riht out serchid and the trouthe out founde,
 As a iust cause, ondifferant to tweyne
 Toward vs bothe the quarell doth rebounde.
 And mor strongli our mater for to grounde,
 Reherse I will, so that ye sauff it vouche,
 A mortall wrong which the & me doth touche.

1044 "It is a mortal
 wrong, which
 you must clearly
 understand.

1048

1018. no] none R.

1022. reherse in thi presence] rehersen in sentence H.

1024. or] & R. 1027. hooli] om. R.

1034. &] om. J, H 5, R 3.

1037. menyng] mevyng R.

1038. o will o hert H — 2nd o] one R.

1045. A-riht] at riht H.

"I was in a castle called Col-
lace, when
young Tarquin
appeared
without
warning.

In a castell which callid is Collace,
Off which my lord heer hath the gouernaunce, 1052
Tarquyn the yonge cam into that place.
I, full diswarre to make purueiaunce
Ageyn his comyng or any ordenaunce,
Toforn nat warnyd off his officeris, 1056
Sat onpurueied among my chaumbereris.

"To avoid
idleness I and
my women sat
spinning soft
wools.

Off entent teshewen idilnesse,
We sat and span vpon wolles soffte;
For she off vices is a cheeff maistresse 1060
Wher she is cherissid & iset alofte:
But off custum as I haue do ful offte,
I and my women duli as we ouhte,
Tauoide slouthe ful bisili we wrouhte. 1064

"He came in
very respectfully
and deceived me
with words that
were contrary
to his heart.

His ent[e]ryng was meek and debonaire,
Benygne off port, off look & off visage,
With a pretence off many woordes faire, 1068
In whos menyng was ful gret outrage,
His cheer contrarie* onto his corage.
In this wise ther he was receuyed,
Wherbi, alas, I falsli was deceyued!

"I received him
courteously, as
became a man
of his position:
yet all the while
he intended to
betray me.

At pryme face, as me thouhte it due, 1072
I hym receyued at his in comyng:
Roos up meekli and gan hym to salue,
As appertened in alle maner thyng
Onto the sone off a worthi kyng. 1076
And treuli Tarquyn, for which I seie alas,
Me to be-traisshe stood in the same caas.

The son of a
king should be
a protector of
women and play
the part of a
knight.

A kynges sone sholde off du[e]te¹
Been to wommen wall and proteccioun, 1080
Preserue and keepe hem in al surete,
That no man sholde, off no presumpcioun,
Doon hem no wrong nor oppressioun,

1058. teshewen] to shew B. 1064. we] om. R.
1067. many] may R. 1069. contraire B. 1074. to] om. R.

¹ *The following five lines, to which are appended the two last of the preceding stanza, are inserted before line 1079 as a complete stanza in the Phillippis-Garrett MS., section 10, leaf 6 a:*

I trusted well his riall noblesse
Be any sing þat y kouþ a spie
He no þing ment but trouþ & gentilnesse
But oft falleth as clerkes speciefie
Vndre fair speche men may treson wrye.

Rather deie than seen hem suffre onriht,
Aduertisyng the office off a knyght.

1084

But in contraire off knyghthod he hath wrouht, [p.158]
Be fals outrage doon ageyn[e]s me.

"But Tarquin
only sought
means to break
both civil and
natural law in
my person.

Wrong[e] weies and crokid menys souht
Off lawes tweyne to breke the liberte,
And difface the auctorite
Off lawe ciuyle & natural also,
In my persone offending bothe too.

1088

1092

First be his fals[e] subtil compassyng
He gan espie thestris off the place;
And whan a-bedde alone I lay slepyng,
Lik a leoun, ful sterne off look and face,
With his lefft hand my throte he dede embrace,
And in his other heeld ageyn al lawe
Me for toppresse a naked suerd idrawe.

"First he spied
out the inner
rooms, and then,
when I lay
asleep in bed,
he came on me
like a lion,

1096

Thus afforcyng my wifli chastite,
Ageyn knyghthod he dede this gret offence,
Mi liff, my worshepe put in perplexite,
Hauyng no myht to make resistence, —
Me manacyng be dedli violence,
The ton off tweyne: to deie in his entente,
Or to auoutri* falsli to consente.

and, seizing me
by the throat,
threatened my
life with a naked
sword if I would
not consent to
commit
adultery.

1100

1104

Thus I stood sool atwen deth & diffame,
Mi bodi corrupt, my sperit abood[e] cleene;
Mi spousaile broke, & my good[e] name
For euer disclaundred, that whilom shon ful sheene.
Euel fame off custum will alwei wexe greene,
Neuer deie, the peeple so hem disporte
The werste off thynges gladli to reporte.

"Thus I stood
between death
and dishonour,
my body cor-
rupted, my spirit
pure; but my
good name
destroyed for
ever.

1108

1112

Alas, alas! among my sorwes all,
This oon the moste that doth myn herte agrise; —
I am nat worthi that men me sholde call,
Or haue the name in no maner wise,
For thoffence which ye han herd deuise,
To be callid, in this wrecchid liff,
Off Collatyn from hen[ne]sfoorth the wiff.

"Alas, the most
terrible of my
sorrows is that I
am no longer
worthy to be
called your wife!

1116

1120

1106. tauoutri B.

1108. my] in H.

1112. hem so H.

1113. thynges] al H.

1115. the] om. R.

"My eyes are
blinded with
shame: never
may I be
reckoned as an
honest matron!

Myn eien also be blyndid with derknesse,
Onli for shame to leffen vp ther siht,
Outher ther stremys or bemys vp to dresse,
Off the cleer heuene to looke vpon the liht.
Nor I mai neuer been off the noumbre off riht,
Off trewe matrones, among hem ferr nor neer,
For to be rekned in ther kalendeer.

1124

"Let my injury
be so punished
that it may
become a lasting
example to
adulterers.

Lat myn Iniurie and this mortal cryme
Be so pun[y]shed off riht and equite,
Without delay off any lenger tyme,
That euer afftir it may exaample be
Thoruh al the world and eek in this cite, —
With such a payne therupon deuised,
That all auoutours may be therbi chastised.

1128

"And if it seems
to you that I too
am culpable, I
will patiently
accept my
punishment."

And yiff it seeme in your opynyoun,
In this caas I sholde been onpure,
I will receyue iust punycioun
And the payne pacientli endure,
Yiff it so stonde that paraenture
Ye deeme off resoun, that be so iust & stable,
In this mateer that I be coupable."

1136

After she had
told her story
and they had
absolved her of
all blame and
promised to
avenge her
wrong, she took
a sharp knife and
pierced herself
to the heart.

Hir tale told. Whan thei longe hadde musid
On this compleynt in ther inward siht,
Off trouthe echon thei heeld hir ful excusid,
Made all beheste, with al ther ful[le] myht
Tauenge hir wrong; and Lucrece anon riht
Took a sharp knyff, or thei myhte aduerte,
And rooff hirsilff euene thoruh the herte.

1144

1148

¶ The Compleynt of Bochas Oppon þe luxurie of
Princis by examplis of diuers myschevis.¹

Bochas in hot
indignation
wrote a com-
plaint against
those princes,

BOCHAS in herte brennyng hoot as fir
Off verai ire and indignacioun
Ageyn tho princis, which in ther desir
Han fulli set ther delectacioun,
Ther felicite and ther affeccioun
To folwe ther lustis off fals lecherie,
Froward spousbreche and off auoutrie.

1152

1125. neuer] *om.* R. 1126. nor] or R.
1140. be] it be H. 1141. culpable R.
1148. thoruh] to H. 1149. hoot] as hoot H.

¹ *The same heading in J and R. by] as by J — many dyuers J — myschevis] myschaunces R, J.*

He writ ageyn hem that seeke occasiouns,
 Places off lust to han ther libertees
 For to fulfille ther delectaciouns;
 And for tacomplisshe ther gret dishonestees,
 Deuyse out tauernes in burwes & citees,
 And sitting ther among ther cumpanye,
 Afftir the deede thei booste off ther folye.

1156 who, following
 their evil
 desires, commit
 adultery, and
 afterwards
 publicly boast
 of their folly.

1160

Yiff any man pynche at ther outrage,
 Or them rebuke for ther tran[s]gressiouns,
 Thei will ansuere with froward fals language,
 And for ther parti allegge gret resouns:
 First how it longeth to ther condiciouns
 Be riht off Nature, as it is weel kouth,
 Freli to vse lecheri in youth;

[p. 159] If any man
 rebuke them,
 they will tell
 him that it is
 a law of
 nature to do
 such things in
 one's youth,

1168

Afferme also, how lawe of Kynde is fre,
 And so afforce hem to sustene ther partie
 Bexauple off Dauid, which that took Bersabe,
 And for hir sake how he slouh Vrie,
 Dede manslauhtre and fals auoutrie, —
 For hem aleggyng, ageyn riht and resoun,
 For Dalida the luxure off Sampson.

and allege
 David and
 Bathsheba and
 Samson and
 Delilah in their
 defence,

1172

1176

The stori also thei frowardli applie,
 How for a woman prudent Salamoun,
 The Lord offendyng, dede ydolatrie.
 And in diffence off ther opynyoun,
 Reherse these storyes for excusacioun
 Off ther errour, therbi a pris to wyne,
 As tofor God lecheri wer no synne.

and tell also how
 Solomon be-
 came an idolater
 for the love of a
 woman; — as if
 harlotry were no
 sin before God!

1180

Thei nat considre in ther entencioun
 Off these stories eueri circumstaunce:
 First off kyng Dauid the gret contricioun,
 Nor vpon Sampson how God took gret vengeance;
 First how he loste his force & his puissaunce
 For his offence — thei ha[ue] nat this in mynde,
 Nor how that bothe his eien wer maad blynde.

1184 They never con-
 sider David's
 remorse or
 God's ven-
 geance on
 Samson,

1188

Nor ther resouns thei list nat to encline
 For to conceyue in ther discrecioun,
 The sperit off wisdam, heuenli & dyuyne,
 Was take away fro prudent Salamoun
 In chastisyng for his transgressioun.

or how Solo-
 mon was
 deprived of his
 spirit of wisdom
 for his offence,
 and, as some
 doctors affirm,
 sorely repented
 afterwards.

1192

1157. lust] lustes R.

1171. so afforce] tafforce H.

And summe doctours affermen ouermore, 1196
How Salamon repentid hym ful sore.

People say that the licentious-
ness of youth is
natural to all
healthy animals;
they think only
of vicious
pleasures and lie
and boast and
now-a-days hold
horrible oaths,
flattery and
ribald speech
courtesy.

The play off youthe folk calle it lecherie,
Seyn that it is a gamen off Nature,
And to sustene and bern vp ther partie, 1200
How it sit weel, be record off scripture,
Onto euerich liffli creature
That stant in helthe and is coraious,
Off verrai kynde for to be lecherous. 1204

Vicious report thei han in remembraunce,
But vertuous thyng is ferr out off mynde;
Flessfli lustis and lecherous plesaunce
In ther desirs be nat lefft behynde. 1208
Auauntyng, lieng thei can off newe out fynde;
And now-adaies thei holde curtesie
Othes horrible, flatryng and ribaudie.

They never
think of noble
Scipio and of his
advice to
Masinissa either
to leave
Sophonisba alone
or else marry her.

In ther auys thei taken litil heede 1212
Onto the doctryn off noble Scipioun,
Which comaundid, in story as I reede,
To Masmissa, ful famous off renoun,
Nat to touche be no condicioun 1216
Sophonisba, fairest off visage,
But yiff it were be weie off mariage.

Although of
royal blood,
she was virtuous
and wedded to
King Syphax,
who reigned in
Numidia.

Thouh she wer born off the blood roiall,
Hir youthe was set to al honeste, 1220
Douhter and hair to noble Hastruball,
Duc off Cartage, the story ye may see;
And for hir vertues off femynyte,
She weddid was, off berthe as she was lik, 1224
To kyng Siphax, which regned in Affrik.

To prove the
liberty of virtue
and the
thraldom of vice,
Cato shewed
that the former
is never subject
to Fortuna.

And for to preue the grete liberte
Which is in vertu conveied be resoun,
And the fals thraldam off dishoneste, — 1228
Off bothe to make a pleyn comparisoun,
Afftir the doctryn off Censoryn Catoun,
Shewid be hym to folkis in comune,
That vertu neuer is subiect to Fortune: 1232

1196. evir more H. 1199. a game H.
1210. holde it curtasye H. 1215. Mascinissa P.
1223. vertues] vertuous R.
1224. was weddyd R.

Vertu conserueth mesour and resoun,
 Considreth thynges afor or thei befall,
 Takith non enprises but off discrecioun,
 And on prudence foundeth hir werkes all;
 Ay to hir counsail attempraunce she doth call,
 Warli prouydyng in hirsilff withynne
 The eende off thynges tofor or she begynne.

Virtue has foresight and undertakes nothing without discretion,

1236

This was the doctryn tauht fourth off Catoun,
 Lecherous lustis to put hem vndir foote,
 Grauntyng to vertu the domynacioun,
 Plukke up vices, braunche, cropp & roote.
 Frut off goodnesse groweth up so soote,
 Whan it is plauntid off youthe in a corage,
 It neuer appalleth in helthe off his tarage.

1240 which was Cato's doctrine.

1244

Catoun with vertu was a cheeff officer,
 Preferryng euer comoun commodites
 Tofor profites that wer synguler;
 Tenhauce the comoun in kyngdames & citees,
 Ther wittis peised and ther habilitees,
 Personys promotyng, in whom it was supposid,
 That thei in vertu wer natureli disposid.

[p. 160] Cato always preferred the welfare of the people to individual advantage,

1248

1252

Manli off herte he was ay to susteene
 Indifferentli trouthe and al iustise;
 Flesshli delites off folk that wer oncleene
 He was ay redi be rigour to chastise,
 And sette lawes in ful prudent wise
 For to punshe flaterers and lechours
 And such as wern openli auoutours.

and supported justice and truth, and was ever ready to punish unclean folk.

1256

1260

He hadde off women non opynyoun
 With hem to dele for lust nor for beute,
 But yiff it were for procreacioun, —
 So stable he was founde in his degre,
 The book reedyng off immortalite
 Which Plato made, the trouthe weel out souht,
 Therin concludyng, how soulis deie nouht,

He had no desire to have ado with women except for procreation,

1264

But lyueth euer outhur in ioie or peyne.
 Thus wrot Plato in his orygynall:
 Men may the body be deth ful weel constreyne,

1268 and read Platos book on the immortality of the soul.

1235. Emprises H. 1237. she] he R.

1239. tofor or she] or they R. 1245. a] om. R.

1246. in helthe off] of helth in H, in hegh of R 3, in heyth of P.

1265. Immortalite H. 1268. lyueth] lyven H.

1269. Thus] this H.

But the soule abit ay inmortal.
 For which this Catoun, stedfast as a wall,
 For comoun profit to deie was nat afferd,
 Whan he hymself slouh with a naked suerd.

1272

Cato was not
 afraid to die for
 the common
 weal, saying to

But to Fortune aforn his deth he saide,
 "O thou pryncesse off worldli goodes veyne,
 To thi flatereris I neuer dede abraide,
 Thi fauour is so fals and oncerteyne
 That neuer I fauht no fraunchise to atteyne
 As for my-silff, nor parcial syngulerte,
 But al for profit touchyng the comounte.

1276

1280

Fortune, "I
 never yielded to
 thy flattery nor
 sought gain for
 myself. I resisted
 Cesar for free-
 dom's sake and
 forsook life,
 despising the
 world."

A-geyn Cesar I made resistance,
 To conquere fredam to me & to the toun,
 Freli teschewe his mortal violence,
 This world despisyng in myn opynyoun, —
 Our fraunchise thrallid vnder subieccioun,
 Iustli forsakyng the variaunce off this liff,
 Mi soule conueied to be contemplatiff."

1284

1288

Before his death
 this prudent old
 Cato wrote
 beseeching im-
 moral princes to
 follow the
 example of
 Drusus,

This philisophre, this prudent old Catoun,
 Tendryng in herte comoun comoditees,
 Toform his deth wrot off compassioun
 To them that sat in roial dignitees,
 Which hadde off vertu lost the libertees,
 Pryncis besechyng, that wer luxurious,
 To take exaample and folwe kyng Drusus.

1292

who loved virtue
 and was always
 faithful to his
 wife.

¶ The which[e] Drusus, be successioun
 Heir to Augustus, was next hym emperour,
 Sett al in vertu his affeccioun,
 And it to cherishe dede hooli his labour.
 To lust onleefful he neuer gaff fauour;
 And touchyng loue, duryng all his liff,
 He neuer hadde lust but onli to his wiff.

1296

1300

Once when
 asked with
 incredulous
 impertinence
 what sort of
 attraction could
 his wife have
 for him,

And in his paleis, myd off his roiall see,
 Off noble pryncis duellyng in Rome toun
 He axed was, for al his dignite,
 What maner corage or temptacioun,
 Or what feruence or delectacioun

1304

1271. Immortal H, R.

1277. flaters H.

1279. fauht] auht H.

1280. nor] no R.

1286. Our] or H.

1287. this] his H.

1293. the] ther H.

1302. to] til H.

Withynne hymself he hadde off louys play, 1308
Sool bi his wiff whan he a-bedde lay.

And lik a prynce fulfillid off hih noblesse, he answered
Ansuerde ageyn with sobre cuntenaunce, simply, that he
"Touchyng such lust as folweth flesschlynesse, 1312 had never
Lik as Nature me put in gouernaunce, known another.
In oon alone is set al my plesaunce:
For with non other for no concupiscence,
Sauff with my wiff I neuer dede offence." 1316

Pryncis echon folwe nat the traas All princes
Off noble Drusus, as ye shal vndirstonde; have not
For summe ha[ue] stonde* al in a-nother caas, — followed in
Such as can holde too or thre on honde, Drusus' foot-
Now heer, now ther, as botis home to londe, steps.
Nat considryng ther cres nor disauail, 1320
Whan newfangilnesse bloweth in ther sail.

¶ Eek Bochas writith, sum princis ha[ue] be Some even go so
founde, far as to seduce
Which viciousli ha[ue] do ther besy peyne, 1324 virtuous women
Vertuous wommen be flatric to confounde, by flattery and
And tendre maidnes to bryngen in a treyne, young girls with
Such manacis & tormentis to ordeyne, brutal threats
Them to transfourme from ther perseueraunce 1328 and torments.
And interrupte ther virgynal constaunce.

But off such folk that yeue no fors off shame, [p. 161] Of all such
Nor dreede God such treynes to deuise, shameless
Husbondmen in soth ar most to blame 1332 people married
With foreyn women to trespass in such wise: men are the
I trowe ther wyues may hem inouh suffise; worst: I'm
For many ar feeble ther dettis for to quyte, sure their wives
Thouh thei in chaung themsilff falsli delite. 1336 are quite
sufficient for
most of them,
although they
delight in
change,

Summe afferme, for themsilff alleggyng, and say that
To such outrage that thei ha[ue] licence Nature gives
Freeli off Nature to vse ther owne thyng, them permission
And in such caas to no wiht doon offence. to do as they
But froward is ther error in sentence, please with their
Fro bond off wedlok, whan thei be so onstable, own bodies.
And tofor God most hatful and dampnable. 1340 But they are
very hateful to
God.
1344

1311. Ageyn answerd R. 1317. traas] trac is H.
1319. stonden B. 1323. blowen H.
1333. ar] be R, er H. 1337. falsly hem silff H.
1338. ther silff H. 1343. Fro] For H.

Reason distinguishes the life of man from that of animals. She has given him the knowledge of right and wrong and the power to resist vice,

For she that is thoruh hir hih noblesse
Namyd off clerkis, which cleerli can concerne,
Douhter off God, ladi and pryncesse,
Resoun callid, to guye man and gouerne, 1348
Tween good and euel iustli to discerne, —
She hath departid, pleyntli to concludre,
The liff off man fro liff off beestis rude.

and shewn him that once she has fled away, he becomes a beast rather

This ladi Resoun, sithen go ful yore, 1352
Gaff onto man witt and discrecioun,
Tauhte hym also bi hir souereyn lore
Twen vice and vertu a gret dyuysioun,
And that he sholde in his eleccioun 1356
Onto al vertu naturali obeie,
And in contraire al vicious liff werreie, —

than a human being.

And to enprente in his memorial,
How off luxure the gret dishoneste 1360
Difforme a man & make hym bestial,
And disfigure, off what estaat he be:
For whan that resoun, in hih or low degre,
Is fled away, folk may afferme than, 1364
He is lik a beeste rather than a man.

Therefore let princes amend their lives and punish all those who would destroy the honest fame of women.

Wherfor lat pryncis that ha[ue] be defectiff
To folwe ther lustis off sensualite,
Shape hem be resoun for tamende ther liff 1368
And to conserue and keepe ther chastite,
Bothe off virgines* and wifflis honeste,
And to pun[y]she all tho that list laboure
The honest fame off wommen to deuoure. 1372

For who can give back a good name once it is lost?

For whan a lechour be force or be maistrie
Defoulid hath off virgynes the clenness, 1376
Widwes oppressid, and be auoutrie
Assailed wyues that stood in stabilnesse,
Who mai thanne ther sclaunderous harm redresse,
Whan ther good name is hurt be such report? —
For fame lost onys can neuer haue his resort.

1348. man] folk R.

1360. luxurie R.

1362. he] thei H.

1368. for] for to R.

1370. virgines] wyuys B.

A theeff may robbe a man off his richesse
 And be sum mene make restitucioun;
 And sum man may disherite & oppresse
 A poore man from his possessioun,
 And afftir[ward] make satisfaccioun;
 But no man may restore in no degre
 A maide robbid off hir virgynyte.

1380 Thieves and
 oppressors of
 the poor can
 make
 restitution; but
 no man can
 restore to a
 maid her
 1384 lost chastity.

A man mai also bete a castell doun,
 And beelde it afftir mor fresshli to the siht,
 Exile a man out off a regioun
 And hym reuoke, wher it be wrong or riht;
 But no man hath the poweer nor the myht
 For to restore the paleis virgynal
 Off chastite, whan broken is the wal.

1388 A castle can be
 pulled down and
 afterwards re-
 built; an exile
 may be recalled;

Men mai also put out off seruise,
 And officeres remeue from ther place,
 And at a day, whan Fortune list deuise,
 Thei mai ageyn restored been to grace;
 But ther is nouthur tyme set nor space,
 Nor neuer in story nouthur rad nor seyn,
 That maidenhed lost recurid was ageyn.

1396 officials and
 menials can be
 discharged and
 again taken into
 service; but
 it has never
 been told that
 maidenhood
 once lost was
 ever again
 recovered.

For which men sholde haue a conscience,
 Rewe in ther herte and repente sore,
 And ha[ue] remors off ther gret offence,
 To rauysshe thyng which thei may nat restore.
 For it is said and hath be said ful yore,
 The emeraud greene off parfit chastite,
 Stole onys away may nat recurid be.

1400 For this reason
 men should have
 conscience and
 not take what
 they cannot
 return.

And hard it is to rauysshe a tresour
 Which off nature is nat recuperable;
 Lordshipe may nat, off kyng nor emperour,
 Refourme a thyng which is nat reformable:
 Rust off diffame is inseparable,
 And maidenheed[e] lost off newe or yore,
 No man alvue mai it ageyn restore.

1408 Even the lord-
 ship of kings
 cannot repair
 that which
 is irrevocably
 ruined.

1381. sum mene] forne men H.

1384. afftirward] afftir J, P, H 5 —afftirward make] aftir
 make dew R 3.

1389. 2nd a] his H. 1390. wher] whedir R.

1398. tyme nouthir H. 1404. thei may] maist H.

1413. maydenhoode H.

1414. on lyve H.

The old Romans
patiently put up
with tyrants and
robbers, but they
were careful to
punish adul-
terers,

Romeyns olde thoruh ther pacience
Suffrede tirantis in ther tirannyes,
And in ther cite to do gret violence,
The peepel toppresse with ther robberies;
But to pun[y]she thei sette streiht espies
On fals auoutours, at it is weel kouth,
Widwes to rauysshe & maidnes in ther youth.

[p. 162]

1416

as is shewn by
the exile of King
Tarquin and the
death of Appius
Claudius.

Vpon this mateer the stori berth witnessse,
Touchyng thexil off kyng Tarquynus,
Afforn rehersed be writyng ful expresse
The hatful deth off Appius Claudius
For his trespas doon to Virgynus,
The iugementis rehersed and the peyne;
And fro ther office depnyed bothe tweyne.

1420

1424

1428

Was not the city
of the Shechem-
ites laid
desolate for
the crime of
Shechem against
Dinah?

Was nat the cite whilom desolat
Off Synachites for the* ribaudie
Off oon Sychem, which gan a gret debat
To haue* acomplished his foul lecherie,
Whan yonge Dyna, as bookis specefie,
Wente rek[e]lesli walkyng vp and down
To seen the maidnes off that roial toun?

1432

He saw her
walking alone
and assaulted
her, for she had
no chance to run
away;

But whan Sichem this Dyna dede espie
Sool bi hirselff[e] walke in the cite,
He gan anon assaile hir be maistrie,
And for tafforcen hir virgynyte,
Because she hadde no leiser for to fle.
Whos gret offence and transgressioun
The cite brouhte onto destruccioun.

1436

1440

but her father
Jacob and her
brothers Simeon
and Levi and all
her kin

Hir fadir Iacob & hooli hir kynreede
Ageyn this Sichem gan inwardli disdeyne;
Whan the furie off Mars was most to dreede,
To be vengid thei dede ther besy peyne.
And speciali hir worthi brethren tweyne
Fill on the cite, Symeon and Leuy,
Tauenge ther suster & stroie it fynaly.

1444

1448

1417. citees R.

1418. The] with H.

1422. the] ther R.

1428. ther] the R.

1430. the] ther B, J, H, R, the H 1, H 5, Sloane, R 3.

1431. sichen R. 1432. Taue B.

1433. bookis] bochas R.

So mortalli thei gan with hem stryue,
 With ther suerdis grounde sharp & keene,
 Off male childre thei leffte non alyue,
 Thei wer so vengable in ther furious teene.
 The Sichanytes myhte nat susteene
 That dai ageyn hem to stonden at diffence,
 So importable was ther violence.

fell on that city
 and left no male
 child alive.

1452

For wher that God list punshe a man off riht
 Bi mortal suerd, farweel al resistance:
 Whan grace faileth, away goth force & myht,
 Feblith off pryncis the magnyficence,
 Chaungeth ther* power into inpotence,
 Reuersith the kynges ther statli regalie,
 Exaumples in Sichem, for his fals ribaudie.

For where grace
 is lacking and
 God punishes,
 there can be no
 resistance.

1456

1460

It was an hard dreedful punycioun,
 That, O Pryncis, trespass in lecherie
 Caused afor God that al a regioun
 Destroied was withoute remedie.
 This story told[e] for texemplefie,
 Whan noble pryncis to wommen them submitte,
 Grace and al fauour anon doth fro them flitte.

1464 It was a hard
 punishment, the
 destruction of
 an entire region;
 yet such things
 happen when
 princes become
 uxorious.

1468

Off this stori what sholde I write mor?
 In Genesis the residue ye may reede,
 The deth off Sichem and off kyng Emor,
 And how ther kyngdam destroied was in deede.
 Off Sichanites, loo, heer the fynal meede,
 Off lecherie and off his fals plesaunce,
 Which many a rewm hath brouht onto myschaunce!

I shall not tell
 you any more of
 this story; you
 can read it
 in Genesis.

1472

1476

¶ What sholde I efft reherse ageyn or write
 The fals auoutri off Paris and Heleyne?
 Ther woful fall Guido dede endite;
 Poetis echon dede eek ther besi payne
 To declare, how onli bi these tweyne
 The worthi blood, for short conclusioun,
 Off Troie and Grece cam to destruccioun.

And why should
 I write again
 about Paris and
 Helen? Guido
 and other poets
 have declared
 how all the
 noble blood of
 Troy and
 Grece came
 to an end on
 their account.

1480

1484

1451. sharp] & sharp H. 1455. stonden] stoden R.
 1458. al] & R. 1461. ther] the B — Impotence H, R.
 1463. fals] om. R.
 1468. This] be H.
 1471. stori] mateer R.
 1475. Sychamytes H.
 1478. ageyne reherce R.

But offte it fallith that mekil habundaunce
 Off worldli good, with gret ese and richesse,
 In folkis that sette al hooli ther plesaunce
 To folwe ther lustis off froward wilfulnesse, 1488
 Hath caused in londes gret myscheeff & distresse,
 Whan vicious liiff ther corages dede encoumbre,
 Destroied kyngdames & peeplis out off noumbre.

When people
 will not turn
 from their
 licentiousness,
 they are in-
 evitably brought
 to confusion, like
 the Gibeonites,

For whan the peepel thoruh fals obstynacie 1492
 Is indurat tamende hem and correcte,
 And wil nat turne hem from ther lecherie,
 But ay ar redi ther soules to infecte, —
 And onto purpos my stile I will directe, 1496
 Texemplefie how Gabaa the toun
 Was for his synne brouht to confusioun.

Whilom this peepel callid Gabanytes, [p. 163]
 From Beniamyn descendid in ther lyne, 1500
 Wer ai disposid to folwe ther delites,
 And off custum ther wittis dede enclyne
 In worldli plente to flouren & to shyne,
 And dempte alwai, to them it was most due 1504
 Off wilfulnesse ther lustis for to sue.

who outraged
 the Levite's wife

In lecherie was set al ther plesaunce,
 And in that vice thei ladde most ther liiff,
 Werbi thei wer[e]n brouht onto myschaunce, 1508
 And many on slayn be ful mortal striff,
 Whan the Leuite cam forbi with his wiff,
 Ful excellent off fetures and beute,
 And took his loggyng withynne that gret cite. 1512

and caused her
 death,

He was ful old, and she was inli fair,
 He inpotent and she but tendre off age,
 Thoruh Gabaa makyng ther repair.
 The citeseyns off inportune rage, 1516
 Shewing the furie off ther gret outrage,
 So longe that nyht hir beute dede assaile,
 Till liiff and breth attonys dede faile.

1485. it] *om.* H.

1490. corage R.

1498. his] this H — to] *om.* R.

1507. vice] wyse R.

1514. impotent R, H.

1516. importune R, H.

- Contagious was the sclandre & diffame,*
 In Iudicum the story ye mai reede,
 Which to reherse is a maner shame,
 To heere thabusiouⁿ off that foule deede;
 And how the Leuite amorwe gan take* heede
 With pitous cheer, & sauh his yonge wiff
 Tofor the gate depnyed off hir liff.
- He hente hir up & leid hir on his asse;
 To noise this crym vpon eueri side,
 Thouhte in such caas he myhte do no lasse, —
 Took a sharp suerd, & list no lenger bide,
 On twelue parties he gan hir to deuide,
 And to ech Tribe off Jacob he hath sent
 A certeyn parti, to seen ther iugement.
- Which thyng to hem was hatful & terrible,
 And in ther siht ful abhomynable.
 And in al haste likli and possible,
 Alle off o will and o corage stable,
 On Gabonites for to be vengable
 Thei gadred han, shortli to conclude,
 Tassaile that toun a ful gret multitude.
- Whan thei first mette, atwen hem thus it stood:
 The twelue Tribus wer twies put to fliht,
 On outhr parti gret quantite off blood
 Was shad among hem in that mortal fihit;
 For sexti thousand, who that counte ariht,
 Wer slay[e]n ther, the stori wil nat lie,
 Tauenge the sclandre off fals avoutrie.
- Loo, heer the guerdoun off the froward firis
 In lecherous folk, that wil nat staunchid be,
 That brente so hoothe thoruh bestial desiris
 In Gabaa the myhti strong cite,
 Which was destroyed for his iniquite,
 And almost brouht off Beniamyn the lyne
 Thoruh this offence to eternal ruine.

1520 and brought
 great slander
 and defame on
 themselves, as
 is told in
 Judges.

1544

1528 The Levite
 divided her
 body into 12
 parts and sent
 one to each of
 the Twelve
 Tribes,

1532

1536 who resolved to
 take vengeance
 on the
 Gibeonites,

1540

1544 and fought a
 battle with
 them in which
 sixty thousand
 men were slain
 and their city
 destroyed and
 the line of
 Benjamin
 almost brought
 to ruin for ever.

1548

1552

1520. was] *om.* J, P — &] & the B, R, H, J, H 5.

1524. on morwe R — taken B.

1527. hente] sent H — on] vpon H. 1530. abide H.

1531. hir] hir hede R. 1532. to] *om.* R.

1537. 2nd o] of o R. 1540. that] the R.

1542. Tribus] tribis H. 1546. ther] *om.* R.

1553. off] to H.

Holofernes too
was decapitated
by Judith for
his drunken lust,

¶ Eek for his feruent dronken lecherie
Oloffernes be Iudith loste his hed; 1556
And al his host and al his cheualrie
Lefte the feeld & fledde awei for dreed,
And he lai bathed in his blood al red.
Thus thoruh this vice, yiff it be weel souht, 1560
Ful many a prynce hath be brouht to nouht.

and many a
prince has come
to his end for
this vice.

These said[e] stories ouhte inouh suffise,
Yiff men wolde considre & taken heede,
The grete vengauces in many sundri wise 1564
Which God hath take for this synne in deede,
As in ther bookis thei may beholde & reede
Warnynges afforn, ful offte put at preeff,
How thei hemsilff shal saue fro myscheef. 1568

Lenvoye.

This tragedy
warns us that
many princes,
together with
their regions,
have been
destroyed
because of their
dissolute habits.

THIS tragedie yeueth vs a gret warnyng,
Be cleer exaumples of manyfold resoun,
How many a prince for ther mysleuyng,
And many riche, roial, myhti toun, 1572
Many a cite and many a regioun
Ha[ue] been euersid, ful notable & famous,
For synne off pryncis that wer lecherous.

David, who slew
Uriah that he
might possess
Bathsheba, was
well punished
for it,

The chose off God, Daudid the worthi kyng, 1576
Prophete off prophetis, most souereyn off renoun,
On Bersabe for a sodeyn lokyng
To slen Vrie cauhte occasioun,
For which he suffred gret punycioun, 1580
Chastised off God, he and al his hous,
For cause onli that he was lecherous.

and repented
sorely, writing
psalms of
contrition to
make amends
for his
transgression.

Gret repentaunce he hadde & gret sorwyng, [p. 164]
And made psalmis off gret contricioun, 1584
With woful teris & manyfold wepyng
To make a-seeth for his transgressioun,
Yeuyng to pryncis ful cleer direccioun
For to eschewe* the flattri odious 1588
And the fals fraude off wommen lecherous.

1569. a] *om.* H.
1573. 2nd a] *om.* R.
1588. teschewe B.

Wher was ther euere off science or cunnyng
 So renommed as was kyng Salamoun?
 Yit wommen made hym, thoruh[ther] fals flatteryng, 1592
 To foreyn goddis doon oblacioun,
 Which clipsid his honour & brouht his fame doun,
 That was in wisdam whilom most vertuous,
 Til he thoruh wommen fill to be lecherous. 1596

Who was there
 ever more
 famous for his
 wisdom than
 King Solomon?
 Yet his honour
 was darkened
 by women.

Is it nat eek remembrid be writyng,
 Off Israel how the cheeff[e] champioun,
 Which goddis peeple hadde in his ledyng,
 I meene the famous, myhti, strong Sampson, 1600
 That thoruh his force to-rente the lyoun, —
 But Dalida with teres plenteuous
 His grace berafft hym & made hym lecherous.

Samson yielded
 to the tears of
 Delilah,

Sichem was slayn eek for the rauasshyng 1604
 Off yong Dyna, as maad is mencioung;
 His fader Emor brouh[t] to his eendyng,
 Lost his riches in that discencioun,
 And his kyngdam brouht to destruccioun. 1608
 Loo, heer the fyn off pryncis vicious,
 Which them dispose for to be lecherous!

and Shechem
 was slain for
 seducing Dinah.

It is in erthe oon the moste pereilous thyng,
 A prynce to been off his condicioun 1612
 Effemynat, his wittis enclynyng,
 Be fals desirs off flesschli mocioung,
 To put hymselff vnder subieccioun,
 And thralle his resoun, tresour most precious, 1616
 To onleeful* lustis, hatful & lecherous.

It is perilous
 for a prince to
 be effeminate
 and to allow
 his reason to
 become thrall
 to unlawful
 desires;

This is the sentence ful pleynli in menyng:
 Wher women haue the dominacioun
 To holde the reyne, ther hookis out castyng, 1620
 That sensualite ha[ue] iurediccioun
 To entre on resoun bi fals intrusioun,
 Werre ageyn vertu most contagious,
 To be venquysshid off lustis lecherous, — 1624

for where
 women have
 domination and
 sensuality con-
 quers virtue,

It taketh fro men ther cleernesse off seyng,
 Causeth gret siknessis and corrupcioun,
 And to al vertu it is grettest hyndryng,

men become
 corrupt in body
 and grow old
 before their
 time.

1590. or] & R. 1591. Renowned H.

1592. ther] om. J, R. 1597. Is it] It is R. 1605. Off] As R.

1617. onleeful] thonleeful B, H, R, J.

1626. and] of H.

Maketh men seeme old, as be inspeccioun, 1628
 Appallith ther mynde and disposicioun,
 Shorteth ther daies, thyng dreedful & pitous,
 Whan thei dispose hem for to be lecherous.

Noble Princes, beware the deception of women, especially such as love only for gain, who like Sirens, anoint your ears with sugared flattery.

Noble Pryncis, in your ymagynyng 1632
 Conceyueth off women the fals decepcioun,
 Namli off them that loue but for wynnynge,
 And labour ay for your possessioun,
 Whos sugred flatrerie is fals collusioun, 1636
 Lik to Sirenes with vois melodious
 Enoynte your eres to make you lecherous.

[How Cambises assentyng to the moordre of his
 brothir Mergus at last slouh himsilf.]¹

After Cyrus, his son and heir Cambyses came complaining to Bochas, that the Egyptians were idolaters and worshiped Apis, who was called god of gods by fools and slain by his brother.

A FFTIR the deth of myhti kyng Cirus, 1640
 Next cam his sone callid Cambises,
 Heir be successioun ful victorious,
 Which tofor Bochas put hymselff in pres
 And gan his compleynt — this is dout[el]les, —
 That thei off Egipt, in many vnkouth wise, 1644
 To sundri goddis dede sacrificise.

First onto Apis thei dede reuerence,
 Callid Serapis, ther grettest god off all,
 Regnyng in Egipt off most excellence, 1648
 And god of goddis foolis dede hym call.
 And off his noblesse thus it is befall,
 Slayn bi his brother, which is a gret wonder,
 Seuered on pecis & ful ferr cast assonder. 1652

As the Egyptians held Apis in such honour, Cambyses resolved to throw down all their temples;

And thei off Egipt made ther ordynaunces,
 Vp peyne off deth in ther statutis olde,
 A god to calle hym, & doon ther obseruaunces 1656
 Withynne his templis, lik as thei wer holde.
 Wherooff Cambises, toform as I you tolde,
 Alle the templis off that regioun
 Cast hym be force for to throwe down.

1629. and] and ther R.
 1647. ther] the R.
 1659. throwe] throw hem H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 68 recto.

The temple off Iubiter to robbe it be rauyne,
 Callid Amon, withoute excepcioun,
 His knyhtis sente to brynge it to ruyne.
 But thei echon for ther presumpcioun,
 With sodeyn leuene wer smet & bete doun.
 Wheroff Cambises, in Asie tho regnyng,
 Hadde this drem as he lai slepyng.

1660 and when he
 sent his knyghts
 to rob Jupiter
 Ammon, they
 were suddenly
 struck by
 a thunderbolt.

1664

He drempte his brother, that called was
 Mergus,

Sholde in the kyngdam afftir hym succede.
 Wheroff in herte he wex so envious,
 That he purposed, off rancour and hatreede,
 Bi sum mene to make his sides bleede;
 And that his purpos sholde take auail,
 A magicien he took to his counsail.

[p. 165] Cambyzes
 dreamt that he
 should be
 succeeded by
 1668 his brother
 Smerdis and
 consequently
 resolved to kill
 him.

1672

And he was holde a ful gret philisophre,
 Callid Cometes, ful slehti and cunnyng,
 To whom Cambises made a large proffre
 Off gold and tresour to make hym assentyng
 To execute this horrible thyng;
 And that he wolde in most cruel wise
 The moordre off Mergus compassen & deuise.

1676 He took counsel
 of a magician
 called Cometes
 and offered him
 great treasure
 for Smerdis'
 life.

1680

And whil Cambises ordeyned this tresoun,
 To slen Mergus, his owne brother deere,
 God from aboue caste his eien doun,
 Hym to pun[y]she in ful cruel manere:
 For he wex wood[e], who-so list to lere,
 Cauht a sharp suerd, & roff his thih on tweyne;
 And sodenli he deied for the peyne.

1684 But God, who
 saw what was
 going on,
 punished
 Cambyzes with
 death,

For too causes God took on hym vengeance,
 As myn auctour Bochas doth expresse:
 For his presumptuous fals disobeisaunce,
 Spoilyng the goddis off her gret richesse,
 And for the froward gret onkynd[e]nesse
 To yeue assent to the contagious caas,
 Whan that Mergus his brother moordred was.

1688 for two reasons:
 because he
 presumptuously
 despoiled
 the gods of their
 great wealth,
 and because of
 his unkindness
 to his brother
 Smerdis.

1692

1662. it] om. H.

1675. Comeres P — and] of H.

1686. thih] teth H.

War followed,
and Persia stood
disconsolate
without an heir
to the throne,
although
Gometes substi-
tuted his brother
Oropastes
(Smerdis the
Magian) for the
murdered
Smerdis.

The deth off whom was cheeff occasioun
Off ful gret werre, stryues and debat, 1696
Eek fynal cause whi al the regioun
Off myhti Perse stood disconsolat:
For heir was non, off hih nor low estat,
Be title off riht, thoruh this onhappi chaunce, 1700
To been ther kyng and ha[ue] the gouernaunce.

For the magicien callid Cometes,
Which slouh Mergus, as ye haue herd expresse,
Took his brother callid Oropastes, 1704
And made hym kyng, the stori berth witesse,
Because that he resembled in liknesse
Onto Mergus off face and off stature,
To crowne hym kyng therfore he dede his cure. 1708

The death of
Smerdis was not
publicly known
at first,

THE deth off Mergus outward was nat knowe
Nor pleynli publisht in that regioun;
His bodi buried and cast in erthe lowe.
Off whom the moordre and fraudulent tresoun, 1712
The pitous slaughtre wrouht be collusioun,
And al the maner, bi processe was espied
So openli it myhte nat be denyed.

but later on a
prince named
Otanes sought
to find out all the
circumstances
of the case,

And in what wise the noise gan out sprede 1716
Touchyng this moordre odious for to heere:
Whan that Oropastes ocupied in deede
The crowne off Perse, the stori doth vs lere,
Ther was a prynce ful notable & enteere, 1720
Callid Hostanes, that gan his witt applie,
Off hih prudence this moordre out tespie.

believing that
Oropastes had
no just right to
the crown.

Whil that Oropastes, vnder a fals pretence,
Off Perciens was resseyued as for kyng, 1724
The said[e] prynce dede his deligence,
Bi inquisicioun to ha[ue] knowlechyng,
Be what engyn or be what slehti thyng
The said Oropastes cauhte occasioun 1728
In stede off Mergus to ocupie the crown.

1696. striffe R. 1697. whi] whi that R.
1698. disconsolat] consolate R. 1700. this] his R.
1701. kyng] heir R. 1702. Comares P.
1711. erthe] therth H. 1717. for] om. H.
1718. Oropastes J, R 3, P. 1721. Otanes P.
1723. Oropastes J. 1724. receyued was H.
1726. to haue] ta full H. 1728. Oropastes J.

On this mateer he hadde a coniecture,
 That his title was nouthur hool nor cleer.
 The trouthe to trie he dede his besi cure,
 And to serche out hooli the maneer,
 He souht[e] so ferr that he cam riht neer,
 And in this caas lettid for no slouthe,
 Till that he hadde founden out the trouthe.

1732

The cas was this, pleynli to termyne:
 He hadde a douhter, ful fair off hir visage,
 Which off the kyng was cheuest concubyne,
 Bi whom he thouhte to cachchen auauntage.
 And onto hir he hath sent his massage,
 Secreli tenqueren how it stood,
 Wher that the kyng wer come off Cirus blood.

1736

Finally he
 discovered the
 truth through
 his daughter,
 who was the
 king's chief
 concubine.

1740

And bad she sholde secreli taken heed,
 Whil that he slepte to doon hir besi peyne
 With hir handis for to feele his hed,
 And to grope afftir bothe his eris tweyne.
 And yiff it fill — ther is no mor to seyne —
 Vpon his hed that she non eris founde,
 To telle hir fadir, off trouthe as she was bounde.

1744

He bade her
 secretly feel the
 king's head
 while he slept
 and see whether
 he had ears or
 not;

1748

This myhti prynce Hostanes knew[e] weel, [p. 166]
 Riht as it is recorded be scripture,
 Touchyng this caas how it stood euerideel,
 How kyng Cambises off sodeyn auenture,
 Bi his lyue for a forfeiture,
 Made off Orapastes, the stori seith nat nay,
 Bothe his tweyne eris to be kit away.

1752

for Otanes
 knew that
 Oropastes had
 forfeited his ears
 as a punishment
 during Cam-
 byses' reign.

1756

And heerupon to be certefied,
 He was desirous ta[ue] ful knowlechyng.
 Which be his douhter whan it was espied,
 Vpon a nyht liggyng bi the kyng,
 Gropyng his hed[e] as he lai slepyng,
 Ful subtili felte and took good heed,
 How he non eris hadde vpon his hed.

1760

It turned out
 that the king
 had no ears.

1764

And to hir fadir anon she hath declarid
 The secrenesse off this auenture.
 And for no feer nor dreed he hath nat sparid,

So Otanes called
 the princes of
 Persia to a
 council,

1731. nor] ne H.
 1759. taful B.

1733. serche] seche R.
 1766. this] his R.

1738. hir] om. R.

How that it stood[e] pleynli to discure. 1768
 And first off all he dede his besi cure,
 Alle the pryncis off Perse-lond ifeere
 To counseil calle tentrete off this mateere.

at which he told
 them about the
 murder of
 Smerdis.

And whan thei wern assemblid euerichon, 1772
 Off Oropastes he told hem al the chaunce,
 And how that Mergus was moordred yore agon,
 As heer-toforn is put in remembraunce.
 Wherupon to sette an ordynaunce 1776
 And to redresse these wronges doon toforn,
 Off Perse-lond wer seuene pryncis sworn.

Seven princes
 were sworn to
 dethrone
 Oropastes.

Off oon assent in¹ ther entencioun,
 Bi bond off oth thei made ther assuraunce, 1780
 And a ful secre coniuracioun
 To putte Oropastes from his roial puissaunce,
 Which hadde al Perse vnder his gouernaunce
 Bi a ful fals pretens off heritage, 1784
 For he was lik to Mergus off visage.

They took their
 swords with
 them, and,
 forcing their
 way into the
 palace, attacked
 the king, but
 were at first
 held off by his
 brother, who
 slew two of them.

These seuene pryncis, off which toforn I tolde,
 Alle off oon herte, & bi ther oth ibounde,
 Prudent and manli and off yeris olde, 1788
 Han souht a tyme Oropastes to confounde.
 And with ther suerdis sharp[e] whet & grounde,
 Wonder couert in ther appaile,
 Cam off entent Oropastes to assaile. 1792

And in the paleis whom-euer that thei mette
 Or ageyn hem made resistance,
 Alle off accord thei fersli on hym sette.
 But the magicien, that was ther in presence, 1796
 Cam ageyn hem be sturdi violence,
 And at thencountre gan hem so constreynre,
 That off the pryncis thei haue islay[e]n tweyne.

[Oropastes occupyeng the crowne of Perce bi iniust
 title was moordred.]¹

At last they
 prevailed and
 killed Oropastes
 and all who were
 in the palace.

But fynali the tother pryncis fyue, 1800
 Whan that thei sauh ther tweyne feeris bleede,
 In al the paleis thei leffte non alyue.

1772. assemblid] assembled to gedre R. 1777. to] om. H.

1781. secre] sette R. 1786. These] The H.

1790. sharp whet suerdis & grounde R — I grownde H.

1791. Wonder] Vndir H. 1792. for tassaile H.

1793. the] that H. 1798. thencountre] thentre H.

¹ MS. J. inner margin 68 verso.

And kyng Orapastes, quakyng in his dreede,
 Ful onwarli, or that he took heede, 1804
 Was slay[e]n ther, guerdoned for al his myht, —
 Off pretens kynges which regne & ha[ue] no riht.

[How Dary obteynnyng the kyngdam of perce be
 sleiht eended with shame.]¹

AFFTIR the deth of this magiciens
 Was lefft no kyng to ha[ue] the gouernaunce, 1808
 Nor for to reule the lond off Perciens,
 Sauff pryncis fyue, ful famous off puissaunce,
 Which made a statut and an ordynaunce
 Off oon accord, be record off writyng, 1812
 Theron concludyng who sholde be chose kyng.

After the death
 of these magians
 there was no one
 to be king in
 Persia save five
 princes,

Ther sort, ther happe and al ther auenture
 Was youe to Fortune off this eleccioun,
 As thus: that prynce the crowne shal recure 1816
 Among these fyue, be ther convencioun
 For to gouerne the myhti regioun
 And in that lond to regne & contune,
 Lik as the fauour list ordeyne off Fortune. 1820

who agreed
 to choose one
 of themselves,

This was the statut: vpon a morwenyng,
 Alle attonys erli for to ride
 Atwen Aurora and Phebus vprisynge,
 Vp to an hill to houe[n] and abide,
 Al rancour & discord set a-side, 1824
 Whos hors among hem was first herd neieng,
 Withoute gruchchyng sholde be crownyd kyng.

in the following
 manner: to ride
 out early in the
 morning up a
 hillside and to
 elect him king
 whose horse
 neighed first.

Vpon this mateer what sholde I lenger tarie? — 1828
 Heeron was maad an oth in sekirnesse.
 Among these pryncis ther was on callid Darie,
 A prynce off Perse excellyng off noblesse,
 Which hadde a seruau[n]t, the stori berth witnesse, 1832
 That kept his hors, & thouhte in verrai deede
 He wolde his lord preferre at such a neede.

One of the
 princes, whose
 name was
 Darius, had a
 servant who
 thought he
 would help his
 master win.

1810. fyue pryncis R.

1812. Off] And H. 1814. happis H. 1816. As] And R.

1821. mornynge H. 1824. houe[n] hove H, P — abide] ta-
 bide H.

1825. discorde & rancour H. 1834. a] om. R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 68 verso.

So on the day
before the con-
test he let his
master's horse
come together
with a mare on
the same hill-
side, and when
they rode there
the next day,
nature caused
the horse to
neigh loudly.

The said seruant, ful sleihty in werkyng,
His deligence list nothyng to spare.

[p. 167]

1836

The dai toforn[e] set off ther meetyng,

At a place smothe, pleyn and bare,

His lordis hors he made lepe a mare.

And on the morwe whan the pryncis mette

1840

On hors[e]bak, there his lord he sette.

And whan the hors thedir cam ageyn,

Nature anon afforced his corage

To neie loude vpon the same pleyn,

1844

Wher-as the mare had vsid hir passage.

Kynde in such caas hadde gret auauntage.

Be which[e] sleihte, pleynli to reherse,

The said[e] Dary was crownyd kyng off Perse.

1848

The princes
made no con-
tradiction, and,
dismounting
from their
horses, said to
Darius, "Long
live the King!"

The pryncis alle, lik ther convencioun,

Or Phebus shewed his firi bemys briht,

Withoute striff or contradiccioun

From ther hors sodenli aliht;

1852

And onto Dari, as lowli as thei myht,

Saide in Greek[e] or thei vp aros,

"*Policronitudo Basileos!*"

Which is in Latyn, to speke in wordes pleyn,

1856

And in Inglissh, bexpownyng off scripture,

Aftir the Greek, as moche for to seyn

As, "long[e] tyme mote the kyng endure," —

And lyue in helthe with good auenture,

1860

Bi the grace and fauour off Fortune

Vpon al Perse to regnen and contune.

It is remarkable
that a man
should rise to be
king by such
means; but when
Fortune favours,
no one can
say nay.

Who list considren eueri circumstance,

It is a merueil nat groundid on prudence,

1864

Bi such a sleihte a kyng tagouernaunce,

Thoruh title or cleyrn as off iust euidence,

So to be reised to kyngli excellence.

But whan Fortune fauoureth such assay,

1868

Till that she chaunge, ther can no man sei nay.

1835. sleihty] sleuhty R. 1836. nothyng] nat R.

1837. by forn H. 1841. lord] horse H.

1850. his] hir H — fire R.

1855. Polycronitudo P.

1856. in] om. R.

1866. or] of R.

Thus was kyng Darie, born off louh lynage,
 Set up be sleihte in estaat honorable.
 Thouhte that he wolde for his auauntage,
 To make his kyngdam & his regne stable,
 Wedde such a wiff as to hym was most hable,
 Demyng off trouthe his cleyrn wer weel amendid,
 Off Cirus lyne yiff she were descendid.

As Darius was
 not of high
 lineage, he
 married a
 descendant of
 Cyrus to
 strengthen his
 position.

1872

1876

To wedde suchon was al his couetise,
 Stable for to regne vpon the Persiens.
 And, as I fynde, in ful cruel wise,
 Bi the counseil off fals magiciens
 A werre he gan vpon the Egipciens.
 Eek folili he gan for to werreie
 Them off Athenys, which list hym nat obeie.

and foolishly
 made war on the
 Egyptians and
 the Greeks.

1880

And, as myn auctour maketh rehersaile,
 He for his pride and fals presumpcioun
 Was disconfited twies in bataile,
 And neuer aftir, as maad is menciou,
 He was nat had in reputacioun,
 Mong Persiens so gan his honour fade.
 With sleihte he gan; with shame an eende he made.

1884

1888

He was beaten
 twice in battle
 and never
 afterwards held
 in respect by
 the Persians.
 He began with
 deception and
 ended with
 shame.

[How Corolian bi Romayns exilid gan werre ayenst
 hem and how aftir thei sent out his moder with
 othir for pees, which had, thei eft him exilid &
 aftir was slayn.]¹

AFFTIR this Darie, as I reherse can,
 And myn auctour likith to conclude,
 To Iohn Bochas cam Corolian,
 The moste woful off al that multitude.
 Which gan compleyne vpon thyngatitude
 Off the Romeyns, how thei whilom in deede
 Exilid his persone, off rancour & hatreede.

After Darius,
 Coriolanus
 appeared, com-
 plaining how
 the Romans had
 exiled him,
 although he had
 never ceased to
 labour for the
 common profit.

1892

1896

Which in his tyme wolde neuer cese,
 Thoruh his noblesse and his hih renoun,
 Ther comoun profit tawmente and encrese,
 And for to brynge to ther subieccioun
 Many a cite and many a noble toun.

1900

1876. she] he R.

1893. Coriolan P. 1894. al] om. H.

1902. 2nd a] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 69 recto.

Yit thei ageynward, for al his cheualrie,
Han hym exilid off malice and envie.

1904

When he saw
how unkind the
Romans were,
he went to the
Tuscans and
persuaded them
to begin a war
on Rome with
his help.

But whan this Marcus, callid Corolian,
Sauh off Romeyns the gret onkynd[e]nesse,
Toward a cuntre that callid was Tuskan
Off hih disdeyn anon he gan hym dresse,
And hem entretid, off manli fell prowesse
To gynne a werre, sithe thei so manli be,
Thoruh his conveieng geyn Rome the cite.

1908

He told them
that the Romans
were torn by
dissension and
that they would
win easily.

And for to put hem mor in assuraunce,
To ha[ue] victorie thoruh ther hih renoun,
He tolde hem pleynli off a gret distaunce,
Off a fals striff and a discencioun

1912

That was off newe falle in Rome toun;
Wherfor thei shulde, yiff it be provided,
Conquere hem lihtli, because thei were deuided.

1916

He assembled a
great Tuscan
army, and when
it arrived before
the city the
Romans were
overcome with
fear, which is
always the
case when a
kingdom is
divided.

Bi ther assent he made a gret arme,
With stuff for werre richeli apparailed,
Pihte his tentis tofor that strong cite,
And in the feeld stood proudli [en]batailed.
But the hertis off Romeyns han hem failed,
And durst nat passe the gatis off ther toun,
Ther was among hem so gret deuysioun.

[p. 168]

1920

Ther cite stood that tyme destitut,
With feer supprised for lak off gouernaunce.
Them to diffende thei fond[e] no refut,
So ferr enfeeblisshid was ther old puissaunce.
For euer gladli, wher striff & variaunce
In any kyngdam haue an interesse,
Touchyng diffence,* a-dieu al hardynesse!

1928

1932

There can be
no wise counsel
where there is
discord.

Withynne hemsilff[e] thei stood at debat;
Afforn ther enmyes redi for tassaile;
Confort was non in hih nor low estat:
For wher discord is, what counsail mai auaille?
Ther foon withoute, withynne hemsilff bataile,
Brouht in, alas, to ther confusioun,
Bi the fals serpent off discencioun.

1936

1906. Sauh] Sauff R.

1909. fell] hih R, hygh H 5.

1921. afforn H — strong] gret R.

1932. diffence] a diffence B, R, J.

1935. louh nor hih H.

1922. batailed J.

But at the laste afforced and constreyned,
 Thei were coact[e] afftir pes to seeke.
 The caas stood so: off nede thei wer peyned,
 Maugre ther myht, ther hertis for to meeke.
 And ther myscheeff mor tencrece and eeke,
 In awmentyng off ther cruel fatis,
 Thei sauh ther enmyes briht armed at ther gatis.

1940 So there was
 nothing to be
 done but sue for
 peace.

Thei sent out first preestis off the toun
 With ther enmyes for tentrete off pes,
 With humble proffres & low subieccioun;
 But Corolian, this is dout[el]les,
 Ageyn the Romeyns was so merciles,
 That grace non myht in his herte myne
 To ther request his eris to enclyne.

1948 The Romans
 first sent
 out priests, but
 Coriolanus
 refused to listen
 to them.

Thanne the Romeyns, the stori telle can,
 To Venturia made ther praier,
 Which was the mooder off Corolian,
 And to Volumia, his feithful wiff enteer,
 That thei sholde bothe gon ifeer
 Onto that prynce, besechyng at the leste,
 Benygneli to heryn ther requeste.

1952

1956 Then his
 mother, and
 Volumnia, his
 wife, went to
 him and begged
 him to hear
 their request.

His mooder first ful prudentli abraide,
 Onto hir sone makyng this questioun,
 At ther meetyng to hym thus she saide:
 "Shal I," quod she, "for short conclusioun,
 Off feithful herte and trewe affeccioun
 To thi presence declare fynali,
 Be now receyued as mooder or enmy?"

1960

Said his mother,
 "Am I to be
 received as
 mother or
 enemy?"

Afftir thyn answer I mut myselff dispose
 And my wittis speciali applie,
 Cause off my komyng cleerli to onclose,
 And telle theeffect of myn ambassiatric,
 And my speche so gouerne and guie,
 Afftir I am receyued to thi grace,
 Mi-silff declaryng, yiff I ha[ue] tyme and space.

1964

1968 "My action
 must depend
 upon your
 answer.

For lik thi mooder yiff thou receyue me
 And me accepte onto thi presence,
 I mut therafftir so gouerned be
 To telle my tale pleykli, in sentence,—
 So that thou yiff me freendli audience.
 And yiff I be nat receyued in such wise,
 Mor straung[el]li my tale I mut deuise."

1972

1976 "If you receive
 me as a mother,
 I will give you
 the message of
 the Romans in
 simple words,
 otherwise I must
 tell my tale more
 circumspetly.

1980

1980. be nat] om. R.

Coriolanus embraced his mother and said, "Madam, I receive you as my dear mother, but I intend nevertheless to chastise the Romans for their ingratitude."

This noble prynce, this Corolian,
Whan that he herde his mooder thus compleyne,
Ful lik a lord and a knyhtli man 1984

Gan hir enbracen in his armis tweyne
In lowli wise, ther is no mor to seyne, —
Sauf lik a sone, off due and off riht,
To hire he saide ful lik a ientil knyht: 1988

"Madame," quod he, "be it to your plesauce
To heere my conceit as in this mater.
With feithful herte and humble attendaunce
I you receyue as for my mooder deer; 1992
But, & ye like benygneli to heer,
Thyngratitude, doon in most cruel wise
To me off Romayns, I purpose to chastise."

"Ah son," said she, "their offence can be atoned for: you are of their lineage; let mercy modify your rigour."

"A sone," quod she, "touchyng ther offence 1996
Doon to thi noblesse and ther gret outrage,
Thei shal be menys ther trespas recompence.
And thynk[e] thou art born off ther lynage,
And suffre that merci thi rigour mai asswage, 2000
And thynk off nature thou maist nat weel withseie
Thyng for the which thi mooder doth now preie.

"Do not begin a war against your country and destroy your own line in mortal strife!"

Thou shalt nat close thyn entrailes off pite [p. 169]
To the requestis off me and off thi wiff, 2004
Nor gynne a werre ageyn[e]s thi cuntre,
To stroie thi lyne bi newe mortal striff,
Thi childe and me to make vs lose our liff.
Weie in ballaunce to Romayns thyn hatreede 2008
Ageyns the loue off me and* thi kenreede.

"Send your strange soldiers away, who are so ready to shed Roman blood. I will be hostage."

Send hom ageyn thi straunge soudiours,
Which be so redi the Romayn blood to sheede;
Lat stonde in pes our wallis and our tours; 2012
Suffre thi grace thi rancour to exceede,
So that thi pite mai putte awai al dreede,
And condescende to receyue for hostage
Me to be plegge for ther gret outrage. 2016

"Do not forget how I fed you at my breast when you were an infant,

Behold* the wombe in which that thou wer born,
And see also my naked brestes* tweyne,
Bi which thou were fostred heer-toforne:

1982. Coriolan P.

1989. to] *om.* R — your] yow H, R 3, you H 5.

2002. Thyng] Thynk R.

2008. in] in a H. 2009. and] and off B, H, R, J.

2017. Beheld B. 2018. brestes] sides B, R.

Yiff ther was lak, thou woldest crie & pleyne. 2020
 Remembre theron, and at me nat disdeyne,
 But onto merci receyue this cite
 At the request heer off thi wiff & me.

Whilom my mylk thi cherisshyng was &* foode 2024 and how often I
 To stynte thi cri whan thou dedist weepe, woke to make
 Ther soote dropis ful holsum wer & goode, you sleep.
 Thi tendre youthe for to preserue and keepe. "Have mind on
 And lik a mooder to brynge the a-sleepe, 2028 my request.
 I wook ful offte, to the I was so kynde, —
 Wherefor, deere sone, on my request ha[ue] mynde.

Yiff that thou list this cite now tormente,
 Ther demerites be rigour recompense, 2032
 Pun[y]she me for them, and I will assente
 To ber the gilt off ther gret offence.
 But, deere soone, lat thi magnyficence
 Suffre off knyhtthod that merci mai in deede 2036
 Attentre thi riht, or thou to doom proceede.

Suffre Romainys to lyuen in quiete,
 Graunt hem pes ageyn ther gret outrage,
 Sum drope off pite lat in thyn herte fleete, 2040
 And thynk[e] thou art born off ther lynage.
 Looke vpon hem with merciful visage,
 Which offre hemsilff[e], as thei shal fulfille,
 Ther liff, ther deth, al hooli at thi wille. 2044

Remembre off nature how that the leoun
 Set a-side his rage and his woodnesse
 To them that meekli aforh hym falle down;
 His roial kynde will doon hem no duresse. 2048
 Texemplefe to thi knyhtli noblesse,
 With rigerous suerd thou shalt no mor manace
 Them that be lowli, yolde onto thi grace."

And whan this prynce, this Corolian,
 Had herd al that his mooder list to seyne, 2052
 He goth to hire in al the haste he can,
 Bespreynt with teris that on his chekis reyne,
 And hire enbracid in his armis tweyne, 2056

"If you must
 repay the faults
 of this city
 with severity,
 punish me, who
 am willing to
 bear the guilt.

"Grant peace to
 the Romans,
 have pity on
 your kindred
 who offer to
 submit to you.

"Remember
 how the lion
 refuses to harm
 those who fall
 down meekly
 before him."

Coriolanus
 embraced his
 mother weeping
 and at once
 granted her
 request.

2021. at] lat R.

2024. &] & thi B, H, R.

2036. merci] om. R.

And saide, "mooder, ther mai be no lettyng,
Me off hool* herte to graunte your axying."

He raised the
siege, sent his
Tuscans home
and was received
back into Rome
with joy.

The siege he made for tauoide awai,
And to reparaire hom to ther cuntre; 2060
And with his mooder & wiff he was that dai
With gret[e] gladnesse and solempnite
Anon receyued into that cite,
Lik as Fortune wolde hym neuer haue failed.* 2064
But she soone afftir off newe hath hym assailed.

But afterwards
the fickle
Romans
banished him
again, and he
was then slain
by the disap-
pointed Tuscans.

The geri Romayns, stormy and onstable,
Which neuer in oon stille koude abide, 2068
Ageyn this prynce, most knyhtli and notable,
For to conspire off newe thei gan prouyde,
And ban[y]shed hym to Tuskan ther beside,
Wher he was slayn withynne a litil space,
For he the Romayns took affor* to grace. 2072

[How Melciades duk of Athenys with smal noumbre
venqysshed vj^e Mⁱ perciens, and aftir bi his
comonte that ay of custum desireth a chaunge
of princes newe he was cheyned in prisoun and
so deied.]¹

Duke Miltiades
of Athens

AMONG other that put hemsilff in pres
For to bewaile ther greuous heuynesse,
Cam off Athenys duc Meltiades,*
Which thoruh his manhod & famous hih prowesse, 2076
And thoruh his knyhtli renommed noblesse,
Lich as auctours his tryumphes list comende,
Fauht many a bataile his cite to diffende.

fought many
a battle in de-
fence of his city,

And off [his] victories,* as it is compiled, 2080
For comoun profit off that noble town,
Fauht with a tirant that was toforn exiled,
Callid Hippias, which be fals tresoun

2058. off hool] hool off B, J, R.

2064. haue failed] assailed B. 2070. banyssh H — to] in H.

2072. took affor] affor took B, H, R, J.

2075. Melciades in B and other MSS., the common blunder of the copyists, c for t and vice versa.

2076. famous] om. R. 2077. renowned H.

2080. his] om. R — victoires B. 2082. afforne H, afor R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 69 recto.

Hadde to kyng Darie maad a suggestioun, 2084
 Vpon Athenys, in al the haste he myhte,
 To reise al Perse ageyn that toun to fihte.

Sexe hundred thousand acountid was the noum-
 bre [p.170] and with ten thousand men
 Off Persiens, armed in plate and maile, defeated
 Them off Athenys be force to encoumbre, 2088 Hippias, an
 Echon assemblid them proudli to assaile. exiled tyrant
 But this duc for nothyng wolde faile, who led an
 Meltiades, but knyhtli took his place: army of sixty
 With ten thousand he met hem in the face. thousand
 Persians.

For bothe he was riht manli and riht wis, 2092
 And off his handis proued a good knyht.
 Set vpon them with so prudent ays,
 That thei off Perce, for al ther grete myht,
 Wer foure tymes put onto the flyht
 Bi thilke duc, yiff I shal nat feyne,
 And bi the noblesse off other knyhtis tweyne.

Miltiades put
 them to flight
 four times,

Themystodes icallid was the ton,
 Which off his hand, as auctours list descryue,
 Was in a feeld[e] prouyd on his fon
 The manli[est] knyht in his tyme alyue.
 Which thilke dai so proudli dede stryue
 Geyn them off Perse, & such a slauhter make,
 That fynali the feeld thei ha[ue] forsake.

2100

and with the
 help of Themis-
 tocles and a
 knight called
 Cynaegirus,
 finally defeated
 them.

Cynegirus, a knyht eek off ther toun,
 The same dai thoruh his cheualrie,
 With bloodi suerd, as he wente vp & doun,
 Withoute noubre in his malencolie,
 Slouh Persiens, [as] bookis specefie,
 That for the tyme thei no refut cunne,
 Sauff to ther shippis for dreed off deth thei runne.

2108

2112

2091. faile] falle H. 2092. but] om. R. 2093. he] om. H.

2094. For] om. R.

2095. knyht stuck in scribe's pen R.

2096. Set] Sep R.

2101. Themistocles P, as no doubt Lydgate wrote. The copyists
 have perpetuated an early blunder of d for cl.

2102. handis H — auctours] bookes H.

2103. on] of H.

2104. manliest] manli J, R.

2106. Ageyn H.

2112. as] om. B, H, J, R, H 5, P.

Cynaegirus held
fast the largest
Persian ship
with his right
hand,

And ther he wrouhte a straunge gret mervail,
As writ Bochas, affermyng in certeyne, 2116
The* grettest shipp that bar [the] largest sail,
With his riht hand he gan it so restreyne,
Lik as it hadde be fastned with a cheyne,
Maugre Perciens, which dede hem sore greue, 2120
That be no crafft thei koud nat make it meue.

and when the
Persians cut
off his right
hand he held the
ship with his
left hand, and

But whan that thei non other refut wiste,
Freli tescape[n] out off his daungeer,
Till thei his riht hand heuh off bi the wriste. 2124
But with his lefft hand he gan approche neer,
And heeld it stille, an vnkouth thyng to heer,
That he hadde force so gret a shipp to lette.
But than, alas, his lefft hand off thei smette! 2128

after they had
cut off his left
hand, he held
the ship fast
with his teeth,
while the Greeks
slew 200,000
Persians.

Yit maugre them, whan he ther malice seeth,
Al-were-it so that he hadde lost ech hand,
The shipp he heeld stille with his teeth,
That thei ne myhte departe fro the land, 2132
Lik as ther vessel hadde falle vpon a sand, —
Causere that day, myn auctour doth reherse,
Too hundred thousand wer slayn off them off Perse.

Cynaegirus
then went mad,
and Bochas
tells no more
about him.

And whan this synguler myhti champioun, 2136
Cynegirus, most vnkouth off corage,
Had doon this meruail, as maad is mencioun,
Off verrai angwissh he fill into a rage:
Lik a beeste furious and sauage 2140
Ran a-boute, alas, for lak off mynde! —
In Bochas book no mor off hym I fynde.

Miltiades'
subjects con-
spired against
him in spite of
his victory

But in this processe afftir I beheeld
Ay how that Fortune can hir freendis faile: 2144
For Meltiades, ledere off that feeld
And gouvernour off al that gret bataile,
Causyng victoire, as maad is rehersaile, —
Yit his peeple off malice and off ire 2148
Ageyn his noblesse falsli gan conspire.

and put him in
prison.

Thei off Athenys set hym in prisoun,
And in cheynys myhtili hym bounde,
Onkynd[eli] thei gaff hym this guerdoun, 2152

2117. 1st The] Ther B, H 5 — 2nd the] om. R, J, P.
2119. as] om. R. 2128. thei] the R.
2132. parte frome H. 2133. a] om. R.

For al the knyhtod [that] thei in hym founde.
 Yit had he suffred many mortal wounde
 In ther diffence and for ther libertees,
 To saue ther lyues, ther toun & ther cuntrees. 2156

This was the eende off duc Meltiades,
 Thoruh the constreynt off his stronge bondis.
 Eek thei exilid the knyht Themystodes
 Out off ther toun to lyue in straunge londis, 2160
 That was so worthi preued off his hondis:
 To shewe the chaung and mutabilite
 Founde in Fortune and eueri comounte!

This was his
 end; and
 Themistocles
 was banished.
 Such is the
 change of
 Fortune!

[Lenvoye.]

THE stormy trust off eueri comounte, 2164
 Ther geri corages & troublid constaunce,
 In this tragedie men mai beholde & see,
 Now vp, now down, as Fortune cast hir chaunce.
 For thei off custum ha[ue] ioie & most plesaunce, 2168
 In ther desirs onstedfast and ontrewē,
 To seen ech day a chaung off pryncis newe.

Here men may
 see how little
 trust there is in
 the people.
 They are
 forever wanting
 a change of
 princes.

Corolian off Rome, a cheeff cite, [p. 171]
 Was ther protectour thoruh his myhti puissaunce: 2172
 Venquissid ther enmies, set hem in surte,
 Brouht in rebellis to ther obeisaunce.
 But thei ageynward, off wilful variaunce
 Ban[y]shed hym twies, & no cause knewe, 2176
 Sauff for to seen a chaung off pryncis newe.

Coriolanus, the
 protector of
 Rome, was
 twice banished;

The knyhtli noblesse, the magnanymyte,
 The policie, the prudent gouernaunce
 Off Meltiades, duc off the cuntre, 2180
 Wher that Athenys is cheeff toun in substaunce, —
 Whan he ther comoun gan most to auaunce,
 The mor onkyndli, in honour that thei grewe,
 Most thei wer besi to chaunge hym for a newe. 2184

Miltiades, a
 very great man,
 was set aside for
 another;

2153. that] *om.* J, R, H, P, H 5.

2165. Ther] the H — &] & ther H. 2166. this] his R.

2171. Coriolan P.

2178. *The first four words of 6th stanza preceding are written above this line H.*

2180. the] that R. 2182. most] *om.* R.

2183. The] Ther R.

Themistocles,
the sovereign
knight of his
time, was exiled.

Themystodes, hauyng the souereynte
Off knyhtis alle that bar spere or launce,
Duryng his tyme, — I tak no mor on me,
For comparisouns doon offte gret greuaunce, — 2188
Sexe hundred thousand he putte to vttraunce,
Onto Athenys neuer founde ontrewē;
Yit thei conspired his exil for a newe.

Nothing is
stable, and
especially the
tenure of
kings.

What thyng mai heer floure in felicite, 2192
Or stonde stable be long contynuaunce
In hih estatiss outhir in low degre? —
Now flowe, now ebbe, now ioie, now myschaunce,
Afftir Fortune holdeth the ballaunce. 2196
And speciali, fals, feynyng and ontrewē,
Comouns desir a chaung off pryncis newe.

Noble Princes,
do not forget
this in your
prosperity.

Noble Pryncis, in your prosperite,
On sodeyn chaungis set your remembraunce, 2200
Fresshnesse off floures, off braunchis the beute
Haue ai on chaung a tremblyng attendaunce,
In trust off comouns is no perseueraunce:
As wynter [&] somer be dyuers off ther hewe, 2204
So be thei dyuers in chaung off pryncis newe.

[Ho[w] xerxes kyng of Perce, for his ravyne and
couetise was dismembrid in smale pecys.] ¹

Next Xerxes
came before
Bochas,
weeping
piteously.

UN-TOFOR* Bochas, ful pitousli wepyng,
For to declare his dedli heuynesse,
Cam Xerxes next, that was of Perse kyng, 2208
And gan compleyne his dool and his distresse.
Which in thre thynges, his stori berth witnesse,
And as the cronycle cleerli can vs telle,
All othir pryncis in erthe he dede excelle: 2212

None other was
of such high
estate, so rich,
or of so great
dignity.

In hih estat was non so gret as he,
Nouthir in richesse nor worldli habundaunce,
Nor non that tyme off so gret dignite;
For as it is iput in remembraunce, 2216
He hadde al Perse vnder his obeisaunce,
Nor neuer pryncē, as auctours do concludē,
Hosteied attonys with such a multitude.

2186. or] & H. 2189. vttraunce] variaunce R.
2202. Haue ai] havyng H.
2203 is repeated after 2200 H. 2204. &] om. H.
2206. Un-tofor] And tofor B, R, J. P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 70 verso.

Space off fyue yeer he made his ordenaunce,
 Seuene hundred thousand peeple he dede reise;
 Dempte off fals pride ageyn his gret puissaunce
 Non ertheli power myhte countirpeise.

2220 His army
 numbered
 700,000. He
 thought no
 earthly power
 could resist him.

But summe auctours alowe hym nat nor preise,
 Because that he, peeplis to encoumbre,
 Set al his trust to conquere with gret noumbre.

But manli pryncis han this opynyoun:
 In multitude stondeh nat victorie;
 For knyhtli prowesse off eueri champioun,
 Which manli cast hem in armys to ha[ue] glorie,
 Enprentid hath fix in his memorie,
 Marcial tryumphes God ne doth nat shewe
 In noumbres grete no rather than in fewe.

2228 But manly
 princes know
 that victory
 does not depend
 on numbers.

This said[e] Xerxes, be record off auctours,
 Had also, in cronycles as I reede,
 Thre hundred thousand straunge soudiours,
 Withoutyn othir, that wern off Perse & Mede.
 Which gan the erthe for to cure and sprede,
 Dried ryuers wher thei dede atteyne,
 Karff doun hillis and made valis pleyne.

2236 Xerxes also
 had 300,000
 alien
 mercenaries.
 His armies
 covered the
 earth and
 levelled the hills
 and plains.

This was cheeff conceit off his fantasies,
 To haue al erthe vnder subieccioun;
 Thouhte his power rauhte aboue the skies,
 Off surquedie and fals presumpcioun:
 For as he dempte in his opynyoun,
 How in his poweer pleykli that it lai,
 Fro God aboue the heuene to take awai.

2240 He desired to
 have all the
 world subject
 to him: he
 even believed
 that he could
 rob God of the
 heavens; but
 the Lord will
 not suffer
 tyrants to reign
 long.

But thilke Lord that can the meeke enhaunse,
 And from ther sees the proude putte doun,
 A[nd] namli them that ha[ue] no remembraunse
 To aduertise off wisdam and resoun,
 To knowe the Lord, most myhti off renoun, —
 The Lord off Lordis, which, pleykli to compile,
 Will suffre tirantis to regne but a while.

2248

2252

And oon the merueile that euer I dede reede, [p. 172]
 Grettest and vnkouth pleykli onto me,
 Is how Xerxes, kyng off Perse and Mede,
 For to shewe a special syngulerte,

2256 Xerxes made a
 great bridge
 from Asia to
 Europe —

2222. gret] fals R.

2236. straunge] strong H. 2250. And namli] Anamly R.

2251. aduertise] aduersit H. 2252. renoun] resoun R.

Out off Asie, ouer the Grete Se,
As seith myn auctour, whom I dar alegge, 2260
Into Europe made a myhti bregge.

a marvel that
some men
perhaps will not
believe—but
things that
seem impossible
can nevertheless
be accom-
plished;

Sum men paraunter will therat disdeyne,
And seyn it is a merueile nat credible;
Yit crafft in cas to such thyng mai atteyne, 2264
Which bi nature semeth an impossible:
And, as to me, it is a thyng odible,
Thynges tenpugne, awtentik and olde,
Which notable clerkis in ther daies tolde. 2268

and it is not nice
to doubt the
words of
notable scholars.

These newe men that han but litil seyn,
Nouther expert in crafft nor in nature,
For lak off resoun holde al such thyng veyn, 2272
Thouh that it be remembred in scripture.
For eueri meruail and eueri auenture
Is* straunge to hym, as I reherse can,
That lakketh the cause wherof the ground began.

Xerxes also had
possession of
Egypt and
prepared to
make war on the
Spartans,

This said[e] Xerxes hadde eek possessioun, 2276
Be the title off his fader Darie,
Off al Egipt, as maad is menciou[n];
But thei off Grece were to hym contrarie:
Wherfor he caste no lenger for to tarie, 2280
This proude prynce, but myhtili werreie
Lacedemonoys, which wolde hym nat obeie.

whom
Demaratus
warned
and supplied
with information
written on
tablets beneath
a smooth surface
of wax.

But oon that was callid Demaratus,
Which off that cuntre hadde aforn be kyng 2284
And was exilid, the stori tellith thus,
That tyme with Xerxes in houshold abidyng,
Which loued that lond, for al his exilyng,
Gaff them warnyng, to saue hem fro myschaunce, 2288
Off Xerxes poweer and al his ordenaunce.

He wrot hem lettres grauen in a table,
All themprises* off Xerxes, out off doute, 2292
Off al his stuff and peeple incomparable,
And off his noumbre and his gret[e] route.

2260. alegge] wele legge H. 2261. a] *om.* R, H.

2262. ther at *parawntir* wil H.

2265. an] *om.* R — impossible R. 2272. that] *om.* R.

2274. Is] Is to B, J, R.

2284. afore hadde R. 2285. And] he H — thus] vs R.

2291. themprises] *thenterprises* B, R, J, H 5.

2292. Off] & H. 2293. 2nd and] & of H, R 3.

The which[e] table curid was withoute
 Ful* subtili with wex iplanyd pleyne,
 That off his sonde ther was no lettre seyn.

2296

Thus was thentent off Xerses first discurid
 Onto the Grekis, and al his fel* werkynge.
 But in o thyng thei gretli wer assurid,
 Off trust thei hadde bi expert knowlechyng
 In Leonidas, ther noble famous kyng,
 Which among Grekis, off prowesse & forsiht,
 Was in tho daies holde on the beste knyht.

The Greeks
 were captained
 by Leonidas,

2300

Off cheualrie callid the lode-sterre,
 The sunne off knyhtod, that shon so briht & sheene,
 The berere up, bothe in pes and werre,
 And strengest piler his parti to meyntheene,
 The Grekis riht hand ther noblesse to susteene,
 Charboncle off armys, merour off policie,
 And surest capteyn a feeld to reule & guie.

2304 their best
 knight,

2308

And as myn auctour remembreth in his book,
 How in this cas he was nat rech[e]lles,
 But in al haste foure thousand men he took,
 To lette the weies and comyng off Xerses.
 And bi an hill callid Termophiles,
 Wher Persiens began first ther viage,
 He knyhtli caste to stoppe ther* passage.

2312 who led four
 thousand men
 to Thermopylae,

2316

And secreli espieng the comyng
 Off kyng Xerses with strong apparaile,
 He, lik a knyht, made no tarieng,
 Ches out sexe hundred, armed in plate & maile,
 Which in such cas myhte most auaile,
 And in diffence and helpe off ther cuntre
 Wolde rather deie than from the feeld to fle.

2320 where he chose
 six hundred of
 the strongest,

2324

And couertli thei took[e] ther loggyng,
 And kept hem cloos, till it drouh to nyht.
 And at ther dyner themsilff refresshyng,
 So as thei sat, in steel armed briht,
 The kyng abraide lik a manli knyht,

2328 saying to them
 as they sat at
 their last meal
 before the
 battle,

2294. curid] coverid H.

2295. Ful] For B — pleynd R. 2298. fel] fals B, J, R.

2303. Was hoolde in tho daies R.

2310. surest] fairest H.

2313. al] al be H. 2316. viage] visage R.

2317. ther] the B, H.

Into the feeld aforñ thei shulde gon,
Riht thus he saide among hem euerichon:

"Sirs, dine well, and like good warriors be prepared to sup at night with the gods of the nether world," "Sires," quod he, "now dyneth merili, 2332
And with good wyn afforceth your corage,
Lik goode knyhtis in purpos fynali,
For liff nor deth nat turnyng your visage,
But off assent, cast in your passage, 2336
As ye heer dyne now in especiall,
To suppe at nyht with goddis infernall.

holding together without fear, This is to meene, ye shul your liff iuparte, [p. 173] 173
As hardi knyhtis, proudli to prouide 2340
Withynne the feeld assonder nat departe,
But keep you cloos, & for no dreed deuide.
Desir off worshepe make to be your guide,
Your expert noblesse eternali tauaunce 2344
Be quyk report off newe remembraunce.

and having in your hearts only hope and good trust of victory. And hath this dai nothyng in memori[e],
Nouthur your richesse, your blood nor your kenreede, 2348
Sauff onli hope and good trust off victorie,
And hardi prowesse you to conducte and leede.
And thynkith knyhtli what shal be your meede,
With marcial palmys your renoun & your name
In the hiest place set in the Hous off Fame. 2352

"Though you are but few in number, remember that so long as you stand united you are invincible." And thouth ye been but a fewe in noumbre,
Lat in your hertis o thyng be fantasied:
Whil dyuysioun doth you nat encoumbre,
Victorie in armys mai you nat be denyed; 2356
For nothyng is to conquest mor applied
Than trewe accord among your-silff to shewe,
Thouth ye in noumbre be [founde] but a fewe."

Comforted by these words, they fell on the Persians in their tents at eve, By* this counseil syngulerli notable, 2360
And be this kynges knyhtli* good language,
Thei reconforted heeld themsiluen* able
Ageyn ther fomen to holden ther passage.
And first off all, off hertli proud corage, 2364

2339. is] *om.* H.

2342. you] *om.* R — you cloos] to gedir H.

2347. nor] *ne* R. 2349. conduct] conduyt H.

2359. founde] *om.* R, J — a] *om.* J.

2360. By] But B, But bi R, J.

2361. kynges knyhtli] knyhtis kyngli B, R, J.

2362. themsiluen] themsilff B.

The Perciens mor mortali to greue,
Withynne ther tentis thei fill on hem at eue.

Thei off Perce idrownyd were with wyn;
This to seyen,* thoruh ther gret excesse
Thei lai and slepte lik as dronke swyn,
Ther wach nat kept: loo, how that dronkenesse
Causeth offte, off verrai reklesnesse,
Ful many a man, that wil nat take keep,
For to be moordred anyhtis in ther sleep.

2368 when, drowned
in wine, they lay
unguarded and
sleeping.

And as this kyng dede his knyhtis leede,
The Percien tentis assailyng sodenli,
Or thei wer war or token any heede,
Them for taffraie thei made an hidous cri.
Diffence was noon vpon ther parti;
For men mai knowe bi olde experience,
In folkis dronke mai be no resistence.

2372 With a hideous
cry they rushed
on

Out off noumbre thei slown off ther foon,
And cased nat off al the longe nyht,
Till on the morwe that the sunne shoon,
That to beholde it was an ougli siht.
And proude Xerxes put anon to fliht —
Euer the laste that wolde his foon assaile,
And ay the firste that fledde in bataile!

2376

2380

and slew
without ceasing
all the long
night.

In his fliht so faste awei he ran,
For theryn was hooli al his trust! —
And off gret trauaile anon this Xerxes gan
Off coward dreed to han so gret a thrust,
So drie he was, off salt sond and off dust.
And bi the weie serchyng ferr nor neer,
He nouthur fond welle nor reuer.

2384

2388 Proud Xerxes
fled as fast as he
could, and,
overcome by
thirst,

2392

Off auenture a meri ground he fond,
The water trouble and bloodi off colour;
And Xerxes ther drank water with his hond,
Hym to refresshe in his dedli labour.
And, as he thouhte, he neuer drank licour
To hym mor holsom, so streiht[e] stood the caas, 2400
Confect with spices, pyment nor ypcras.

2396 drank blood-
stained water
from a marsh.

2368. bis is H — seyne B. 2370. Ther] The R.

2385. proude] om. H — to] to the H.

2393. nor] or H, and P, R 3. 2394. nor] ne H, R 3.

2395. meri] myry H, R 3, miry P, mery J, R, H. 5.

2401. nor] or H.

This was his
first defeat,
from which men
may see that
Fortune has no
respect for the
great possessions
and might of
princes who
refuse to know
God.

This was the firste myscheeff and the dreed
In which that Xerses, the myhti prynce, stood.
Heer men mai see, such as list take heed, 2404
How geri Fortune, furious and wood,
Wil nat spare, for richesse nor for good,
Mihti pryncis, which list nat God to knowe,
From ther estatys to brynge hem doun ful lowe. 2408

With new
presumption
Xerxes proposed
to rob the
temples of the
gods,

¶ O hatful serpent of hih presumpcioun,
Ay onstaunchable with gredi vsurpyng,
Be newe trouble, off fals sedicioun,
Which list off pride receyue no warnyng: 2412
For now Xerses, off Perse & Mede kyng,
Purposid hath with odious apparaile
The temple off goddis contagiously tassaile.
For as hym thouhte, it myhte nat suffice, 2416
To gret exaample off his outraious pride,
How heer-toforn God dede hym chastise
Bi manys hand, to sette his pompe a-side.
But now off newe he gan ageyn provide, 2420
Bi sacrilege his myhti hand to dresse,
To spoile Appollo and reue hym his richesse.

and sent four
thousand men

Ther was in Delos a temple thilk[e] dai, [p. 174]
Most statli bilt and set up be masouns, 2424
Gret ymages, reliques, riche arai
Off gold and stonys in sundri mansiouns;
And ther Appollo to sundri questiouns
Gaff redi answeere, the stori tellith thus, 2428
And he was callid Appollo Delphicus.

to pillage the
shrine of the
Delian Appollo.

Four thousand men Xerxes thedir sente,
Bi his auys chose out for the nonys, 2432
Ful clenli armed; & as thei thedir wente
To spoile the temple off gold and riche stonys,
With sodeyn leuene thei wer brent, flessch & bonys,
With tempest, thunder, hail & hidous reyn
Consumpt echon and neuer afftir seyn. 2436

But great Appollo
in his indignation
consumed them
with lightning.

The grete Appollo, which shyneth briht in heuene,
Hadde off this Xerses gret indignacioun,
Which made his peple be consumpt with leuene,

2406. nor] ne R. 2408. to] om. H.
2417. outraious] contrarious R.
2428. answers R. 2434. thei] the R.
2435. tempest] om. H. 2439. be] to be H.

In cruel punshyng off his presumpcioun.
Yit he purposed, to his confusioun,
Sithe on the lond he nothyng myhte wyne,
Vpon the se a werre to begynne.

2440

Gan to make so gret an ordenaunce,
That his nauie couered al the se:
Yit Neptunus thouhte hym nat tenhaunce,
Withynne his* boundis to ha[ue] no liberte;
For Themystodes with a smal meyne,
Beside a cite callid Salamyne,
Hym & his shippis brouhte onto ruyne.

2444 Xerxes next
began a war on
the sea, but his
ships were
scattered by
Themistocles
at Salamis,

2448

Yit, as I fynde, this proude kyng Xerxes
Hadde on his parti Themydora, the queene
Off Halcarnois, which put hirselff in pres,
Armed in platis that shon ful briht and sheene.
And thenarme off Xerxes to susteene,
This womman fauht[e] lik a fell woluesse,
And many Greek that dai she dede oppresse.

2452 although he was
aided by the
queen of
Halicarnassus,
who fought like
a she-wolf.

2456

It was a straunge merueil for to heere,
To seen a woman so sturdi off visage;
Yit men expert aldai may seen and lere,
Thei be bi nature ful cruel off corage,
And no cowardis founde off ther language.
Sett at assai, and thanne it shal be seene,
Wher thei be feerful ther quarel to susteene!

2460 It was a strange
thing: yet every
day men may
see that women
are no
cowards,— at
least, of their
words.

2464

Thei mai off meeknesse shewe a fair pretense, —
Sum serpent is off colour siluer sheene,
And summe floures, ful fressh off apparensse,
Grove on thistles rouh[e], sharp and keene,
And summe that been angelic to seene,
And verai heuenli, with ther golden tressis,
Been at a preeff[e] verrai leonessis.

2468 Some serpents
gleam like
silver, bright
flowers grow on
thistles, and
some women
who look like
angels are on
occasion
veritable
lionesses.

To seyn the sothe, a poore man mai be shent, —
I dar no mor[e] speke off this mateere. . . .
But kyng Xerxes, for al his proude entent,
Al his nauie and his peeple ifeere
Wer put to fliht & outraied off ther cheere.

2472 But as a poor
man may be
ruined for tell-
ing the truth,
I'll say no more.
King Xerxes
himself was
badly wounded,

2476

2445. nauie] name R.

2447. his] hir B, H, J, hyr H 5, her R. 2448. Themistocles P.

2455. And thenarme] The army P.

2461. Thei be bi] Thai beenz of H, bei be of R 3.

2462. off] at H. 2464. quarellis H.

Ther shippis drownyd among the wawes rude,
That non abod off al that multitude.

but again he
summoned his
forces against
the Greeks.

Kyng Xerxes hurt and woundid mortali,
Onnethe he myhte the grete peyne endure; 2480
His quakyng herte quit hym so cowardli, —
On se and lond such was his auenture.
And yit ageyn his damages to recure,
Thre hundred thousand off fihteres he gan call, 2484
Vpon Grekis off newe for to fall.

Themistodes,
knowing what
a coward he
was, informed
him that his
bridge was
broken,

A myhti duc callid Mardonyus
Was capteyn maad his peeples for to leede;
But Themystodes, myn auctour tellith thus, 2488
Knowyng off Xerxes the cowardise & dreede,
A lettre made for to be sent in deede,
Enfourmyng hym, bi Grekis gret outrage
How off his bregge was broken the passage. 2492

and Xerxes fled
in a boat with
one servant,

Off which[e] merueil whan ther cam tidyng
To kyng Xerxes, he afftir anon riht,
As he that was aferd[e] off ech thyng,
Ful lik a coward took hym to the fliht. 2496
Fledde in a boot, lik a coward knyht,
Off al his peeples ther wer no mo iseyn
Tawaite vpon hym, sauff a chaumberleyn.

this army
dispersed and
dying of
privations.

Al his peeples departed heer and yonder, 2500
Standyng in myscheff and gret indigence;
To many a coost thei wente and rood asonder,
Pyned with hunger, lakked ther dispence,
Punshed also with onwar pestilence, 2504
Feeble off trauaile myhte nat endure
For impotence to karien ther armure.

The roads were
full of dead
bodies, the soil
stained with
blood and the air
polluted.
Ravenous fowls
fed upon the
corpses.

Alas ech wai[e] lai ful off careynes; [p. 175]
The soil with blood[e] steyned & the greene; 2508
The hair terrible off pathes & off pleynes,
That no man myhte endure it nor susteene,
The sauour was so odious and oncleene.

2485. off] *om.* R. 2488. thus] *vs* R. 2490. be] *om.* H.

2498. wer] *was* H. 2499. sauff] *but* H.

2502. rode & went R. 2503. payned H.

2508. steyned] *soiled* H.

2510. That no man myht] *bat men myht nat* H — myht
endure it] *myht it endure* R.

2511. The] *ther* H — sauour] *fauour* R — and] & *so* R.

- Raueynous foulis, ful homli in ther siht,
Themsilff to feede vpon the corps aliht. 2512
- Thre hundred thousand off Perciens wer slayn,
Which Mardonyus afor ful proudli ladde.
Off which[e] tidying kyng Xerxes was nat fayn, 2516
But for distresse and sorwe gan to madde.
An[d] oon the laste myscheeff that he hadde,
Was whan Thymon, a noble Grekissh knyht,
Xerxes disconfited & put his men to fliht. 2520
- This Thymon was sone to Meltiades,
His fadir whilom off Athenes kyng,
Which last off all outraied hath Xerxes, —
Sauff off his eende ther fill a-nother thyng: 2524
Artabanus, ful sleiht in werkyng,
Which to Xerxes was nat suspect in deede,
Compassid his deth, in Bochas as I reede.
- This Artaban was prouost off his hous
And an officer most especial, —
With his seuene sonys strong & despitous,
Vpon a nyht furious and fatal,
Fill vpon Xerxes in his paleis roial. 2528
And in his stori as it is remembrid,
On pecis smale thei han hym al dismembrid.
- This was off Xerxes the laste fynal meede,
Off his hih pride the funeral guerdoun; 2536
From his too kyngdamys off Perse & [eek] Mede
Froward Fortune hath hym plucked down.
What mai auaile the dominacioun
Off such pryncis as holde hemseluen evene 2540
For to been egal with goddis hih in hevene?
- Men list nat knowe such chaunges for no preeff,
A[n]d namli pryncis in ther gret puissaunces.
Geyn ertheli pereiles & al worldli myscheeff 2544
Thei can provide hem & set* ordynaunces,
As thei that dreede Fortunis variaunces;
But to Godward thei take litil heede,
For the gret richesse which thei do possede. 2548

Three hundred
thousand
Persians were
slain,

and Timon, son
of Miltiades,
completed their
discomfiture.

Not long after,
Artabanus and
his seven sons
fell upon Xerxes
in his palace and
slew him.

Thus ends the
lordship of
princes who
consider them-
selves equal to
the gods in
heaven.

They take little
heed to God,
although careful
enough to guard
themselves
against worldly
mischance.

2513. aliht] lihte H. 2517. to] forto R.
2519. Cymon P — grekis R. 2521. Cymon P.
2523. hath] om. R. 2529. speciall H.
2537. eek] om. J, R 3, eke of P, eek of H 5.
2543. And] A R — gret] om. R, J.
2545. set] settyn B. 2548. richesse] myscheff H.

If they hear
of an earth-
quake they flee,
and if a

Yiff thei mai heren off an erthe-quauwe
Toform it falle, or any tokne see,
Than will thei gon anon themsilff to saue
Out off ther houses, & from ther toun[e]s flee, 2552
To putte ther liff the mor in surete,
List ther beeldyng, maad off gret costage,
Fill vpon hem in that mortal rage.

horse run away
they will put
him under a
padlock, but
small care do
they take of
their own souls.

Or yiff an hors ronne out off his stable, 2556
Breke his coleer thikke, double & long,
Men will ordeyne a lok off iren able
To keepe hym in, be he neuer so strong.
And thus men can redressyn eueri wrong 2560
Touchyng the bodi, bi gret avisynesse;
Sauf for the soule thei will nothyng redresse.

If a river
overflows its
banks they
endeavour to
change its
course,

Whan a ryuer passeth ferr his boundis,
Boilith vpward, fynt no resistence, 2564
Wynneth land & ouerfloweth groundis,
Drowneth toun[e]s with his violence, —
Yit men will trauaile to fynden a diffence;
To turne his cours sum weie shal be souht, 2568
But toward God men thynke lite or nouht.

and against
illness they use
all manner of
medicines, but
to God they look
for no remedy.

Ageyn siknesse men seeke medicynes,
Letuaries and dyuers pocious, 2572
Serche in phesik sundri disciplynes
Them to diete in ther transgressiouns,
Restoratyves and eek confeccious,
But onto Godward, in this present liff,
Men nat trauaile for no confortatiff. 2576

They will
undergo the
utmost fatigue
and hardship to
win treasure and
put their lives
in peril for
things that are
transitory,

Men ther bodies will putten in distresse
Off fals desir and coueitous feruence,
Onli tacroche and wyne gret richesse, 2580
Suffre cold, labour and violence,
And nouthre spare for gold nor for dispence
To vndirfonge pereilles* off veynglorie,
Onli for thynges that be transitorie.

sailing by
unknown seas
and fighting
many a battle;

Ther passe mounteyns & many hidous roche, 2584
In hope it sholde to ther entent auaile,
To many mortal monstre thei approche,

2549. an] one R. 2550. toknes H. 2552. housen H.
2562. redresse] dresse H.
2575. this] his R. 2581. 2nd for] om. H.
2582. pereilles] peynes B.

And be many vnkouth se thei saile,
Iuparte ther liff in werre and in bataile, 2588
Be many daunger & many streiht thei ride
For worldli tresour, which shal no while abide.

But toward goodis that be perdurable, [p. 176] but towards
Ful lite or nouht ther hertis thei enclyne; 2592 eternal pos-
Nor to the heuenli cuntre most notable, sessions they
Thei wil nat lefft up nouthur hed nor chyne, — never look.
Toward the speeris off Phebus & Lucyne,
Castyng ther stremys to vs fro so ferre, 2596
Which to considre all worldli men doon erre.

What myhte auaile the grete couetise
Off kyng Xerxes in [his] estaat roial?
Or the gret peepel, which ye han herd deuise, — 2600
Ten hundred thousand; — the peepel was nat smal.
But, for al that, he hadde an hidous fal,
Whan that he was, as is toforn remembrid,
On pecis smale pitousli dismembrid. 2604

¶ *Lenvoye.*

THIS tragedie put vs in remembraunce
Off thonsekir flatryng & blyndnesse
Bothe off Fortune & off hir variaunce,
And off hir ougli froward doubilnesse,
In Xerxes shewed, for al his gret richesse, —
To vs declaryng, pleyntli in figure,
A raueynous prynce mai no while endure.

This tragedy
brings before
our minds the
blindness and
fickleness of
Fortune, as
shewn to
Xerxes, for all
his great
riches.

Kyng Xerxes hadde vnder his obeisaunce
Al Perse & Mede, the stori berth witnesse;
Thouhte al erthe to lital in substaunce
To staunche the etik off his gredynesse, 2612
A frett off hauyng put hym in such distresse.
Whos fyn declarid, bi record off scripture,
A raueynous prynce mai no while endure. 2616

He thought the
whole world too
small for him
to possess,

He made also an odious ordenaunce,
Off surquedie his powerer for to dresse,
To robbe the goddis, maugre ther puissaunce,
And spoile ther templis, off froward wilfulnesse,

and in his pride
he attempted to
rob the temples
of the gods;

2593. cuntre] company R. 2596. fro] frome H — so] om. R.
2600. ye] om. R. 2603. is] om. R. 2609. grete] om. R.
2621. the] ther R.

Take ther tresours ageyn al rihtwisnesse.
 But thei hym shewed, off sodeyn auenture, 2624
 A raueynous prynce mai no while endure.

but great Apollo Grete Appollo took on his men vengauce
 took vengeance, With onwar tempest, for al ther sturdynesse,
 and God will Leuene and thunder brouht hem to myschaunce, 2628
 not suffer such Guerdoun most hable ageyn ther gret falsnesse, —
 men to last long. In pryncis hertis, pleyntli to expresse.
 Who be raueyne richessis will recure,
 God wil nat suffre hym longe to endure. 2632

Noble Princes, Noble Pryncis, stable in your constaunce,
 think often of Ye that desire to stonde in sekirnesse,
 the fall of proud Remembreth ofte vpon the fatal chaunce
 Xerxes; avoid Off proude Xerxes and his cursidnesse, 2636
 robbery and Your-silff disposyng in your hih noblesse,
 ravin, and you Yiff that ye list your statis to assure,
 shall endure. Escheweth raueyne & ye shal longe endure!

[How Artabanus moordred kyng xerxes and how
 aftir himsilf was moordred.] ¹

Bochas would NEXT these tragedies, wepyng & dolerous, 2640
 have put aside Whil Bochas stynte, & wolde ha been in pes,
 his pen, had A knyht appered callid Artabanus,
 not Artabanus, Which hadde afor[n]e moordred kyng Xerxes;
 the murderer of And gan his compleynt for to putte in pres, 2644
 Xerxes, Ful concludyng, to speke in wordes pley[n],
 appeared before Who vseth moordre, bi moordre he shal be slayn.

Artabanus, This Artabanus, be record off writyng,
 Xerxes' provost, With Xerxes prouost whilom, as I reede, 2648
 Falsli conspired be sleihte off his werkyng,
 For to be kyng bothe off Perse & Mede,
 Hauyng seuene sonys, which that wer in deede
 Worthi knyhtis, manli and riht strong, 2652
 Al-be ther fader was set to do gret wrong.

presumed to For he presumed bi vsurpacioun,
 usurp the throne In Perse and Mede to quench the cleer[e] liht,
 of Persia, and And trouble the lyne off iust successioun: 2656
 after Xerxes' death

2629. hable] *om.* H — ageyn] geyn J, gein P.
 2631. richesse R. 2636. his] of his R.
 2640. dolorous H.
 2641. Whil] Whan R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 73 recto.

For so as he off force and nat off riht,
 Nothyng rasemblyng to a trewe knyht,
 The moordre off Xerses falsli dede ordeyne,
 Riht so he caste to moordre his sonys tweyne. 2660

And to conclude pleynli and nat tarie,
 The said[e] kyng that callid was Xerses,
 Hadde too sonys, the yongest callid Darie,
 And the tother named Artaxerses, 2664
 Which, as the stori reherseth dout[el]les,
 Wer be discent bor[e]n for to succeede,
 Afftir ther fader to regne in Perse & Mede.

The moordre off Xerses outward was nat knowe, 2668
 Nor how Artabanus hadde the tresoun wrouht,
 Till afftirward withynne a litil throwe
 He hadde off newe forged out & souht
 Fals odious treynes that wer neuer thouht: 2672
 Tolde Artaxerses, as he gan with hym rowne,
 How Darie caste to ocupie the crowne,

And how the deth off Xerses was ordeyned [p. 177]
 Onli be Darie and be noon othir wiht. 2676
 Wherupon, which auhte be compleyned,
 Artaxerses prouyded anon riht
 The slauhtre off Darie; & so, ageyn al riht,
 This yonger brother in his innocence 2680
 Was falsli slayn, and dede non offence.

Ye wete, be whom this tresoun was compassid,
 Twen brethre tweyne to make dyuysioun,
 The yonger slayn, & nothyng hath* trespassid, 2684
 Most redi were to the destruccioun
 Off Artaxerses; for in conclusioun,
 Whan the brethre moordred wer in deede,
 Artabanus thouhte to succeede. 2688

But Artaxerses, be pleyn instruccioun
 Off oon that callid was* Baccar[i]us,
 Be toknys kneuh the couert fals tresoun

sought to
 kill his two sons,
 Darius and
 Artaxerxes.

He told Artaxerxes that
 Darius had set
 his mind on
 occupying the
 throne,

and that he
 had been the
 cause of his
 father's death
 and was also
 plotting to kill
 his brother.

As a result,
 Darius was
 slain in his
 innocence.

Artaxerxes
 was informed of
 Artabanus'
 treason,

2668. Xerse H. 2672. neuer wer R. 2673. Artaxarses H.

2677. auhte] ouht to H. 2680. yonger] yonge R.

2682. wite R, wote H.

2684. yonger] younger brothir R — hath nothyng B — hath]
 had R.

2688. for to H.

2690. was callid B, R — Baccaryus H 5, Baccabassus P.

2691. kneuh] know R.

- Off this forsaid double Artabanus, 2692
 And how that he be treynes outraious
 Hadde Xerses slayn, as ye han herd toform,
 And Darie appechid, wherbi that he was lorn.
- and sought to
 bring him to
 reckoning.
 But as he was
 not powerful
 enough to do
 this alone, But off this vnkouth straunge tresoun wrouht, 2696
 Whan Artaxerses hadde knowlechyng,
 Bi gret auys weies he hath souht,
 Artabanus to brynge to rek[e]nyng.
 But speciali he dradde hym off o thyng: 2700
 He feeble was to brynge this thyng aboute,
 Off his seuene sonys he stood in so gret doute.
- he commanded
 all the worthies
 of Persia to come
 in haste, But for tacomplisshe fulli his entent
 Ful secreli, this was his ordenaunce: 2704
 To all the worthi he hath his lettres sent,
 Duellyng in Perse vnder his obeisaunce,
 Withoute excus or lenger attendaunce,
 Armed echon, and in especial 2708
 To come in haste onto his court roial.
- armed to his
 court. No one
 knew his
 purpose. Cause off ther komyng was to hem nat knowe,
 The kynges purpos was holden so secre
 And kept so cloos, bothe from hih & lowe, 2712
 That to his menyng no man was pryve,
 Except the kyng saide he wolde see
 What noubre off men, yiff it cam to neede,
 In his diffence he myht[e] gadre* and leede. 2716
- Among others,
 Artabanus
 came, armed
 only in mail. And among other cam Artabanus
 Onto the court, and list nat for to faile, —
 A man that was cruel and coraious,
 Ful off sleihtis in al his gouernaile, 2720
 Which thilke tyme armyd was in maile;
 For he with hym non other armour ladde,
 Sauff on his bak an haberioun he hadde.
- To him
 Artaxerxes said,
 "My coat of
 mail is too short,
 I should like to
 exchange
 habergeons with
 you." Thanne Artaxerses, beyng in his strengthe, 2724
 To hym abraide off fals affeccioun:
 "For that my maile wantith off his lengthe,
 I wolde with the chaunge myn haberioun."
 The tother hauyng noon euel suspeccioun, 2728
 Ongirt hymself[e], wolde no lenger bide,
 Bothe suerd & dagger cast hem ferr a-side.

2702. stood in] hadde R, J, had P.

2711. so] om. R. 2712. frome both H. 2716. gadrede B.

2717. And] om. R. 2724. beyng] kyng R — his] om. H.

And whil that he threuh off his haberioun,
 And with the maile stoppid was his siht,
 He beyng naked, for short conclusioun,
 The kyng out pullith a suerd[e] keene & briht;
 And thoruh the herte he rooff hym anon riht.
 And afftir that, off indignacioun
 Took his seuene sonys & cast hem in prisoun.

2732 And as
 Artabanus drew
 his habergeon
 off over his
 head, Artaxerxes
 stabbed him to
 the heart with
 his sword.

2736

Off ther eende what sholde I mor endite,
 Nor off ther deth make a digressioun?
 God mai his vengauce a while weel respite,
 But moordre will out, & al such fals tresoun.
 And for Artaban hadde a condicioun,
 Falsli to moordre, as ye toforn ha[ue] seyn,
 With onwar moordre he guerdonyd was ageyn.

2740 Thus murder is
 punished with
 murder,

2744

Thus euer moordre requereth for his wages
 Sclaundre inportable, odious for to heere, —
 A woord diffamous, most foul in al languages,
 The soun horrible bi report to appeere,
 A clips duryng, whos dirknesse may nat cleere;
 For this woord moordre, most ougli & onfair,
 Bi a rehersyng infectith al the hair.

2748 and there is no
 word more foul
 in any language;
 its spoken sound
 infects all the
 air.

[Off duk Palantus, and Spartenois werred them of
 Missene for rauysshing their maidenens.]¹

A FFTIR the deth[e] and [the] fatal cas
 And pitous moordre off Artabanus,
 Next in ordre appered to Bochas
 A myhti duc, callid Palantus,
 Sone off a knyht Inamed Arathus.
 Which was exiled, thouh he no tresoun mente,
 Out off his cite, that callid was Tarente.

2752 Next in order
 appeared
 Phalanthus, son
 of Aracus, who
 was exiled from
 Tarentum.

2756

Vpon his exil he sore gan compleyne,
 Besechyng Bochas to getyn hym a space
 Withynne his book, to write his greuous payne,
 Al-be that he whilom stood in grace

[p. 178] Fortune raised
 him from a poor
 knight to the
 estate of duke

2760

2732. his] be H. 2734. pullith] plukkith H.
 2738. Off] And of H. 2739. a] om. H. 2740. weel] om. R.
 2741. fals] om. R. 2746. Importable H — for] om. H.
 2752. the] om, H, R, J, R 3, H 1, H 5, H 4, H 3, R 2, Sloane;
 Add. *has* the.
 2755. Phalantus P. 2756. Inamed] named R — Aratus P.
 2758. Tharente H.

¹ MS. J leaf 73 verso.

Be glad aspectis off Fortunys face;
 For she hym reised be fauour off hir myht 2764
 To dukis estat from a ful poore knyht.

at the time
 when the
 Spartans made
 war on the
 Messenians, who
 had ravished
 their maidens
 during a
 religious festival.
 But ceriousli this mater to conveie,
 How he was maad[e] duk & gouernour,
 Whan Sparteys gan mortali werreie 2768
 Geyn Messeniens, as seith myn auctour,
 With gret costage and deligent labour.
 And cause was this; for thei with myhti hond
 Rauesshid be force all maidenys off that lond. 2772

For this peeple, now named Spartenoyis,
 As the stori cleerli can deuise,
 Wer callid afor[e] Lacedemonoyis,
 In armis preued, manli and riht wise. 2776
 And whil thei dede a solempne sacrefise
 Onto ther goddis, the peeple off Messenye
 Rauesshid ther maidenys, or thei it koude espie.

So the Spartans
 laid siege to
 Messenia and
 vowed never to
 depart until the
 town was won.
 On which[e] wrong for to do vengauce, 2780
 The Spartenois kauhte indignacioun;
 And off assent, with al ther hool puissaunce,
 Thei leide a siege round aboute the toun.
 And off o will and oon affeccioun 2784
 Thei made a vow* the siege whan thei begunne,
 Neuer to departe til the toun wer wonne.

[H]ow Spartenois lay ten yere atte sege and how
 their wyves displesid with their longe absence
 sent hem a message vt infra.]¹

They lay before
 it ten years,
 until their wives
 at home grew
 impatient at
 their absence
 and sent a
 message, telling
 them that they
 were tired of
 living alone.
 Afor the toun fulli ten yeer thei lai,
 And fro the siege, as thei hadde maad ther oth, 2788
 Thei nat departed nouthur nyht nor dai,
 But stille abood and nat assonder goth.
 Theroff ther wyues beyng at hom wer wroth;
 To ther husbondis a massager thei sente, 2792
 Vnder these woordis declaryng ther entente.

2764. off] in H. 2765. ful] om. R, J.

2775. toforne H.

2785. a vow] avow B.

2787. Afforne H. 2789. nor] ne H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 73 verso, inner margin.

Saide it was nat accordyng with resoun,
 Thei lik widwes to lyue disconsolat,
 Withoute confort or consolacioun,
 Ferr from ther husbondis to stonde al desolat,
 Myscheuys considred, that fall in ech estat
 Be long absence, which ech man sholde dreede,
 Thoruh duyrs siknesse that fall in womanheede. 2800

"The tid abit nat for no maner man,
 Nor stynt his cours for no creature;
 And hard it is, as we reherse can,
 Thyng to withsonde that kom[e]th off nature. 2804
 Harm doon be kynde is froward to recure;
 And ther is founde ful litil sekirnesse,
 Wher-as nature afforceth brotilnesse.

and that if their
 husbands didn't
 look out, they
 might find that
 others had
 taken their
 places;

This litil sonde auhte inouh suffise,
 To declare damage that mai fall
 Be long absence, folkis that be wise.
 Sumtyme departed, ageyn men may nat call;
 That seelde is seyn, in loue doth appall; 2812
 And nothyng mor maketh wyues erre,
 Than disseueraunce off folk that be in werre."

2808 for there is litte
 security where
 nature afforces
 frailty.

This was theeffect, pleyntli in substaunce,
 Sent to ther husbondis, which at the siege lai,
 Compleynyng thei hadde had no plesaunce
 Space off ten yeer, as in louys plai;
 But desolat, in sorwe and gret affrai,
 Ther liff thei ladde, affermyng in sentence, 2820
 Cause off ther cohstreynt was ther long absence.

And whan the lettres wer at the siege rad
 Toform the cite in al ther mortal stryues,
 Thei wer astonyd and gan to wexe sad,
 And verrai weri almost off ther lyues,
 For to considre the compleynt off ther wyues.
 Till ther capteyn a* remedie out souht,
 Be whos counsail euene thus thei wrouht:

When the mes-
 sage was read
 at the siege,
 there was great
 2824 consternation,

First olde knyhtis that hadde the siege sworn
 It for tacomplisshe, and cast hem to be trewe,
 His counsail was, as thei hadde hiht befor,
 To holde ther promys & theroff nothyng rewe;
 But yonge knyhtis, that wer come off newe,

2828 and Phalanthus
 suggested that
 the old knights
 should keep
 their vow and
 remain, but
 that the
 younger ones
 could return
 home if they
 wished.

2797. al] om. R. 2812. seldom P. 2814. folkis R.
 2816. the] om. R. H. 2818. Spaces R.
 2821. 1st ther] om. R. 2827. a] and B.

Mihte as thei list[e], freli at ther will,
Chese wher thei wolde go or bide still.

And heerupon for ther most auail, 2836
In haste ther capteyn, as maad is remembraunce,
Off hih prudence gaff hem this counsail:
That knyhtis olde, lich ther assuraunce,
Sholde off the siege haue the gouernaunce, 2840
And yonge knyhtis, most fressh & weel beseyn,
Sholde from the siege hom be sent ageyn.

This they did;
and when they
reached home
they decided
to exchange
wives and each
to take the first
one that came
to hand.

Thei made among hem a ful straunge
ordenaunce [p. 179]
At ther hom comyng: withoute difference 2844
To entirchaunge ther wuyes for plesaunce,
And take hir first that cam to ther presence.
This was thaccord among hem in sentence,
Most redi weie, to ther opynyoun, 2848
To engendrure and procreacioun.

So, without
quarreling, they
misused one
another's wives;
and the children
born to them
were called
Partheniæ,
which means
engendered in
adultery.

Ther was among hem quarel nouthur striff
In this mateer, nor no variaunce;
For eueri man mysused othres wiff 2852
To ther desirs as was to hem plesaunce.
And thus childre thoruh this ordenaunce
That wer engendrid, the cas is thus befall,
Parthenois men dede hem afftir call. 2856

Which in our tunge, to speke in woordes pleyne,
Afftir the Greek, who list conside and see,
Is no mor[e], platli for to seyne,
Than thilke childre which engendrid be 2860
In auoutrie: wherfor, in that cuntre,
Parthenois off custum thei wer namyd,
Born off wombes which that wer diffamyd.

The result was,
that no one had
a just claim to
his inheritance,

The fals occasioun off this auoutrie 2864
Caused afftir gret myscheeff & damage,
That no man koude, as for his partie,
Be successioun, whan he cam to age,
Be title off riht cleyme his heritage; 2868
For wher a lyne falsli doth procede,
Hard is to knowe be riht who shal succede.

2835. abyde R.

2836. heerupon] therupon R.

2840. 1st the] om. H. 2842] om. R.

2849. and] and mak R. 2850. nouthur] nor H.

The disturbaunce off fals successioun
 And titles cleymed, afforced with gret myht,
 Wher that auoutrie hath domynacioun
 And is supportid off will & nat off riht,
 And cleym off trouthe hath lost his cleer[e] liht, —
 Thouh ther parties myhti been and stronge,
 God wil nat suffre thei shal endure longe.

as always
 happens where
 there is
 adultery.

2872

2876

And Spartennois peisying all these thynges,
 How fals assurance was in ther lynage,
 The ientil blood troublid first off kynges;
 For no man knew, off hih nor low parage,
 His owne fader be liknesse off visage, —
 Nor fader non, bi his gret errour,
 Koude yeue no title to his successour.

No one knew
 who his father
 was; no father
 was sure of his
 own son;

2880

2884

Wherupon folwed a gret myschaunce,
 Hatful to heere: thoruhout the cuntre
 Ech man troubled in his cuntenaunce,
 Who sholde cleyme be any liberte
 To entre his lond or to stonde fre,
 Such doubte thei hadde, ech man for his partie;
 So importable was the[r] auoutrie!

and as no one
 was able to
 establish a
 valid claim to
 his own land,

2888

This grete myscheeff, who-so taketh heed,
 Be long processe made hem to knowe & see
 How thei wer able, as be likliheed,
 For ther outrages to* fall in pouerte.
 And off assent thei cast hem for to fle,
 Vnder a capteyn, be strong & myhti hond,
 Fro* that cuntre to wynne sum other lond.

2892 they feared that
 they would fall
 into poverty,
 and decided
 to flee their
 country and try
 to win another.

2896

And, as I reede, thei ches duk Palantus,
 Off whom I spak, to gouerne ther passage,
 Takyng no leue, the stori tellith thus,
 At ther departyng, begynnyng ther viage,
 Thei wer so confus off cheer & off visage:
 For ther was noon off al that grete route,
 To chese his fader but that stood in doute.

Duke
 Phalanthus was
 chosen captain;
 and they left
 without taking
 leave,

2900

2904

2878. Spartennois] Partennoys R, Parthenois J, P.

2881. louh nor hih H.

2895. to] forto B.

2898. Fro] For B, R, J.

2902. At] And R.

confused and
overcome with
shame, and
arrived at
Tarentum, a
city in Naples.

Thei heeld hemsilff[e] verrai[ly] ashamed,
And for shame out off that lond thei wente,
Lik a peeple disclaundred & diffamed 2908
Thoruh thauoutrie, to which thei dede assente.
And to a cite that callid was Tharente,
Which stant in Poile, a myhti strong cuntre,
This duk Palantus cam with his meyne. 2912

There Duke
Phalanthus
expelled the
citizens and
long governed
the country in
prosperity,

And ther he putte, thoruh his gret[e] myht,
The citeseyn[e]s out off that cite,
And gat Tharente ful lik a manli knyht,
And ther abood in long prosperite 2916
As gouernour & duk off that cuntre,
Till that his peeple be fals collusioun
Hym to depryue souht out occasioun.

until he was
exiled by his
subjects in
his old age.
Men cannot put
their trust in
the commons.

Thei hym exilid whan he was fall in age. 2920
Loo, what it is in comouns to assure!
Stormy off herte, onseur off ther corage,
That seelde or neuer ther frenship doth endure.
Men mai to-dai ther fauour weel recure, 2924
And tomorwe lat set it at a preeff:
Thei rathest hyndre whan men stonde at myscheeff.

[Off Ceson Quincius exiled and Graccus take
prisonere.]¹

Ceso Quintius
and Gracchus,
prince of the
Æqui, next began
to complain with
one voice to
Bochas.

I CAN no mor reherse off Palantus, [p. 180]
Duk & ledere off Parthennois; 2928
But I will tell how Ceson Quincius
Cam tofor Bochas, with a ful pitous vois
His tale gan, and* Graccus prince off Equois, —
Bothe attonys gan ther song entune, 2932
Most doolfulli to pleyne vpon Fortune.

Ceso was
banished Rome,
although a
dictator.

This myhti prince Ceson Quincius
Compleyned first, as maad is mencion,
How thei off Rome wer contrarious 2936
And felli wrouhte to his destruccioun,
And ful oniustli bashed hym the toun,

2906. verraily] verrai MSS., very P.

2929. Ceso Quintius P.

2930. ful] om. H.

2931. and] how B, J, and how P, H 5, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 74 recto.

And natwithstandyng he was a dictatour,
Hym to confounde thei dede ther labour.

2940

Cause off his exil compassid, as I reede,
That he was slouh, thei saide, & necligent
Hym to defende touchyng apel in deede,
[Which] that ageyn hym was wrouht off fals
entent.

The Romans
said he
neglected to
defend himself
in a suit,
although his
father Cincin-
natus made
amends for him.

2944

Yit Cincinnatus, his fader, be assent
Paide for amendis, as seyn cronycleris,
Met out off lond drauht off thre arblasteris.

Yit his enmyes wolde nat be content,
But proceded that he was exiled,
Dede execucioun off his iugement,
As in his story ful pleynli is compiled,
He afftir neuer myht be reconciled,
Which I ha[ue] pite to put in remembraunce, —
So litel offence sholde ha[ue] so gret vengauce!

2948 But his enemies
were unfor-
giving and he
was never after
recalled.

2952

Gracchus off Rome, callid Cloellius,
Prynce off Equoys, myn auctour seith the same,
Was in his tyme notable and glorious,
And a gret duk, ful renommed off fame.
But how the peeple of Equois first took name,
Vnder support, that no man ha[ue] disdeyn,
I will the processe declare heer in certeyn.

2956 Cloellius
Gracchus was
prince of the
Æqui,

2960

Iohn Bochas seith, ther is a nacioun
Which that first[e] wer callid Hunois,
And secondli also bi successioun
Off ful long tyme named Anathois;
And aldirlast men callid hem Equois,
Lich as I trowe myn auctour seith the same,
Off hors most swiff thei took[e] first the name.

2964

who were first
called Hunois
and afterwards
Anathois,

2968

And as it is remembred in sentence,
Bi ther manheed and famous hardynesse,
Geyn Alisandre thei made a strong diffence
On hors[e]bak thoruh ther gret swiftnesse.

2972

and fought
bravely against
Alexander in
the Caucasus,

2943. apel] the appele P, thappell R 3.

2944. that] om. J, P. 2949. proceede R.

2950. execucioun] extorcoun J.

2951. As] & H — his] om. R.

2959. Aequoys P — first took] took first ther R, J, P — name]

be name H, per name R 3, ther name H 5.

2960. haue] will H. 2961. heer] om H.

2970. manhode R, manhod H.

Beside the hill[e], pley[n]li to expresse,
Which in cronycles is callid Caucasus,
This peep[le] off Equois were victorious.

and were great
horsemen,
conquering
Ethiopia and
India and all
Egypt.

To ther noblesse, pley[n]li as I fynde,
Nothyng in ert[he] was mor expedient
In ther conquest off Ethiopie and Inde,
As hors most swift, seruyng ther entent,
Therbi conqueryng al the orient.
So gret prowesse was in ther passage,
That Equois brouhte al Egipt in seruage.

2976

2980

Wherever they
rode they got
plunder; but
when Gracchus
incited them
against the
Romans, he
was beaten by
Cincinnatus,
a poor but
worthy knight.

Thus wher-euer Equois dede ride,
Thei gat gret good to ther possessioun.
And Gracchus was ther gouernour & guide,
Which bi his steryng and fals suggestioun
Ageyn the Romeyns fill in rebellioun;
But to withstonde hym thei sent out anon riht
Cyncynatus, preued a ful good knyht.

2984

2988

He was weel trusted and knowe in the toun,
And for his prudence chose a dictatur.
His liflode smal and his possessioun,
Al-be he was a worthi werreieur,
Which hath venquysshid be his knyhtli labour
The said[e] Gracchus, for al his gret poweer,
And hom to Rome brouht hym prisoneer.

2992

2996

Cincinnatus
was granted
a triumph,
and Gracchus
died in prison,

Cyncynatus in [his] char was set,
Callid Quincius, for this gret victorie,
And most solempneli with senatours met,
Which gaff to hym, for tencrece his glorie,
Laude off tryumphe, to putte hym in memorie.
And Gracchus afftir, for his rebellioun,
With cheynys bounde, cast in a derk prisoun.

3000

which is an
evidence to us
that Fortune is
always false and
deceitful.

And ther he deide in ful gret myscheeff,
Afftir his conquestis first famous & notable.
An evidence to vs and a gret preeff,
How that Fortune is ai fals & onstable,
Euer double, froward and deceyuable,
The fall off Gracchus declare can ful weel,
That whilom sat so hih vpon hir wheel.

3004

3008

2974. callid is H.

2980. Therbi] gretly H.

2983. ride] abyde R. 2988. out] om. H. 2993. was he R.

[Here Bochas rehercith the tyrannye of Apius and falsnesse of Iuges.]¹

NATWITHSTANDYNG Bochas aforne hath
told

[p. 181]

Off Appius the falsnesse importable,
And his outrages & surfetis manyfold,
To be remembred hatful and repreuable,
Yit as hym thouhte, it was heer couenable,
To mor rebuk and spottying off his name,
Newe to reherse his sclaudre & his diffame.

3012 Notwithstanding that Bochas had already told about the dishonesty of Appius, he thought it would be well to rehearse it once again, the more to rebuke his name.

The grete offensis off this Appius
And oppressiouns that he vpon hym took,
Made hym to growe so inli coueitous,
Thoruh his rauyne that al the peeple quook,
As ye mai seen in the seconde book,
Wher myn auctour doth cleerli specefie
His fraude in doomys, & his fals lecherie.

3020 A lustful, infamous tyrant,

Eek off this tirant remembred ye mai reede
Cheeff iuge he was, with other officeris,
Callid decemvir; & thoruh his pride in deede,
Ageyn the custum of them that wern his feeris,
He made be born standardis & baneris
In other wise, off hih presumpcioun,
Than vsid was aforne in Rome toun.

3024

chief judge and decemvir, he went about Rome with standards and banners borne before him in a manner quite different from that of earlier days; and whereas formerly there had been twelve sergeants, this Appius ordained that there should be 120 men of arms, to overawe the people.

These iuges hadde a custum & maneer,
Lik ther estatis in ther gouernaunce,
Ech afftir other to ha[ue] born a baner
Wher thei wente, such was thordynaunce,
Be twelue sergauntis noumbred in substaunce.
But Appius off pride and gret outrage
I-chaungid hath that custum and vsage.

3032

3036

He first ordeyned ech sholde in his place
Off decemvir haue a baner born,
In ther walkyng, the peeple to manace,
An hundred men off armys them toforne,
And twenti ouer, bi a statut sworn.

3040

3011. to-forne R, toforne H.

3020. to] *om.* R — so] for R. 3024. fals] *om.* R.

3025. off] *om.* R. 3031. vsid was] vsis were R.

3034. to haue born] ta borne H, to ha born J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 74 verso.

Wherbi the cite bar gret cost in deede,
And al the peeple wer put in feer & dreede. 3044

They thought
it remarkable
for judges to go
about in this
fashion; but all
that Appius
wanted was
power to do as
he pleased and
to oppress the
people at his
will.

To seen the sergantis walke in plate & maile,
Thei thouhte it was a merueilous werkyng,
Iuges to gon with such[e] apparaile 3048
In ther procedyng, as ech had been a kyng.
And hool thentent off Appius menyng,
Was that he sholde, off power & off myht,
Doon what hym list, wher it wer wrong or ryht, 3052

The rihtful pun[y]she and the gilty spare,
Fauoure wrong for bribes & for meede.
The peeple oppressid stood in sorwe & care,
Fond no socour to help hem in ther neede; 3056
Lawe was ther non, for resoun lai be dreede,
Will was iuge and plesaunce equite,
And thus be maistri was gouerned the cite.

After the death
of Virginia

And as it is remembred be Bochas, 3060
Appius was lecherous off nature,
And cauht a quarel, as ye han herd the caas,
Ageyn Virgynea, a maide cleene & pure.
And for he sholde in hir nothyng recure 3064
Touchyng his lust, hir fader in that striff
With a sharp suerd made hir lose hir liff.

he was put in
chains and died
in prison,

And for this tiraunt be fals ribaudie 3068
Caused hir deth be hasti violence,
And for he sholde hir beute nat maistrie,
Deieng a maide in hir chast innocençe,
Therfor he was demed in sentence,
As is toforn maad cleer[e] mencioun, 3072
For to be cheyned and deien in prisoun.

and the
decemvirs were
abolished and
succeeded by
tribunes.

Eek decemvir losten ther power,
And neuer in Rome afftir bar no name,
Nor off that sect was maad non officer; 3076
And among all Appius bar the blame,
Whos crym reboundeth to his eternal shame,
As ye han herd[e], who that can discerne, —
And thanne tribunys wer chose for to gouerne. 3080

3047. werkyng] walkyng R.

3050. menyng] meevyng R.

3064. no thyng in hir H.

3071. demed] demyng H.

3074. decemvir] decemviri P.

And in Bochas lik as it is founde,
 The said[e] iuges in myscheff dede fyne;
 Whil Appius lay in prisoun bounde,
 Exiled wer[e]n all the tother nyne.
 The good, the tresour off them & off ther lyne
 Achetid was, for short conclusioun,
 To comoun profit & encreas off the toun.

While Appius
 lay in prison,
 the other judges
 were exiled and
 their goods and
 treasure
 3084 escheated for
 the common
 profit.

¶ *Lenvoye.*

THIS litil tragedie doth shortli heer deuise, 3088
 What myschef folweth for the grete onriht
 Vsid be iuges in many sundri wise:
 For whan that fauour bleendid hath ther siht,
 And innocence is bor down with myht,
 And in his quarel pouert may nat procede,
 Because that trouthe oppressid is with meede.

This litte
 tragedy shews
 what mischief
 can be done by
 venal judges, to
 whom might is
 right.

A iuge sholde off equite despise
 To take giffes off any maner wiht,
 And redi been all wrongis to chastise,
 From all giffes turne awei his siht,
 His handis close, his eris stoppe ariht,
 And been ai war, for frenshipec, hate or dreede, 3100
 That trouthe be nat oppressid with no meede.

[p. 182] A iudge ought
 to despise gifts,
 3096 chastise all
 wrongs and not
 allow truth to
 be overcome by
 rewards.

The noble doctryn and vertuous emprise
 Off philisophres, that hadde so gret insiht,
 Was this to iuges, that prudent wer & wise:
 For freend or fo ther doomys so be diht,
 Off rihtwisnesse that the sunne briht
 Eclipsed neuer, list men for ther falsheede
 Reporte that riht was put a-bak for meede. 3108

Such was the
 noble doctrine
 of philosophers,
 who said that
 3104 judges should
 never allow the
 sun of righteous-
 ness to be
 eclipsed.

Noble Pryncis, supportours off iustise,
 Callid lodesterris to yeue the peeple liht,
 On Appius lat iuges nat* practise,
 That trouthes laumpe be cleer bothe dai & nyht. 3112
 Your office peised, that longeth to a knyht,
 Hold up the balaunce off doom in your manheede,
 That lawe in iuges be nat corupt with meede!

Noble princes,
 do not let judges
 follow the
 example of
 Appius and
 corrupt the
 law through
 bribery.

3085. lynes H. 3088. heer] om. J. 3091. that] the R.
 3094. trouthe] trouhe R.
 3106. that] of R. 3108. a-bak] away H.
 3111. lat nat luges B.

¶ Bochas ageyn thontrowith of Iugis.

After rebuking
Appius, Bochas
wrote somewhat
angrily, that
judges should
be of mature
age and vir-
tuous in their
lives.

SVYNG vpon the deth off Appius 3116
And his rebukes for his gret outrage,
Bochas be writyng wex sumwhat irous
Geyn iuges false, & thouht in his corage
Thei shulde be sad & demeur off age, 3120
And that ther liffe be vertu sholde drawe,
To keepe the preceptis & statutis off the lawe.

They ought to
have knowledge
of philosophy
and devote their
time to civil
and canon law.

Thei ouhte off resoun themseluen to habile,
To haue science off philosophie, 3124
And knowe ther textis off canoun & cyuyle,
And therupon her wittis hool applie;
For cunnyng iuges be prudent policie
Cause ordenaunces, in lawe comprehendid, 3128
Thoruh rihtful doom gretli to be comendid.

Justice is a
very important
thing to all
realms,

Iustise off lawe doth rewmys enlumyne,
Susteneth trouthe, supporteth innocence,
Off raueynour[es] boweth down the chyne, 3132
Punsheth robbours for ther gret offence,
Sluggi truantis for ther necligence,
And feyned beggeris, that gretli disauaile,
Constreyneth them to labour & trauaile. 3136

and in old time
the founders of
law took care
that princes
went no further
in their
triumphs than
the law of
God and Nature
permitted.

Foundours off lawe bi antiquite,
Caused in londis was suffred non errour,
And made off pryncis the roial maieste 3140
To shyne in worshepe, be diligent labour,
Wrestid corages off many conquerour,
That ther tryumphes no ferther sholde atteyne
Than lawe off God & nature dede ordeyne.

Will was then
subject to
righteousness
and sensuality
to reason.

Will was that tyme vnder subieccioun 3144
Off rihtwisnesse, be trouthe ful weel conueid,
Sensualite was seruaut to resoun,
And froward lust was vnder lok weel keied;
Sentence off statutis was nat disobeied, 3148
The riche dede riht thoruhout eueri lond,
Poore folk lyued be labour off ther hond.

3123. themseluen] ther silff H.

3124. be science H.

3128. Cause] Cause of R.

3130. illumyne R.

3134. Slouggi R.

Lordshipe that tyme auoided meyntenauce,
 Hoolichirch lyued in parfitnesse;
 Knyththod tho daies for trouthe whet his launce,
 And fals extorsiouⁿ hadde non interesse;
 Marchantis wynnyng cam al off rihtwisnesse,
 Artificers the werkdaⁱ wer nat idill,
 And bisynesse off labour heeld the bridill.

Women that age farsid wer nor hornyd,
 Nor ther tailes wer nat serpentyne;
 Wis men off foli, nor clerkis wer nat scornyd,
 Which in science most fresshli dede shyne.
 Lawe disherited non heires from ther lyne,
 Lesyngmongers fond that tyme no socours,
 And flaterers thanⁿe wer maad no confessours.

This goldene world[e], flouryng in vertu,
 Born vp be loue groundid on stabilnesse,
 Off auoutri ther sprang out non issu,
 Pryncis be doctryne establisshed ther noblesse,
 Preesthod in praier, knyththod in worthynesse,
 Ech thyng be lawe stood vnder gouernaunce,
 Marchantis be mesour & iust peis off balaunce.

First Phoroneus be dilligent labour [p. 183]
 Fond out lawes, that kyng was off Argyues;
 The Grekis studie he gilte with gret honour.
 This poletik prynce, tauoide hem fro stryues,
 His statutis kept[e] duryng al ther lyues,
 Fond first the maner, Bochas doth deuyse,
 How to Iubiter was maad sacrefise.

Eek myhti Mynos, whilom kyng off Crete,
 Ordeyned lawes ageyn transgressiouns,
 To fere bi rigour foolis that were onmeete,
 And staunche off surfetis all occasiouns,
 Make for robbours myhti strong prisouns;
 And Dedalus, his cheeff artificer,
 Made Laberintus be deligence entier.

And eek Mercurie, born be the flood of Nyle,
 As writ Lactance, was off Egipt kyng,
 Onto marchantis dede lawes first compile
 Off weihte and mesour, to vs[e] in chaffaryng.

The lords
 avoided main-
 3152 tenance, and the
 clergy led lives
 of perfection;
 merchants did
 not cheat;
 knights sup-
 ported truth,

3156

nor did women
 paint their faces
 or wear horned
 headresses and
 3160 long trains.
 Wise men and
 scholars were
 not looked down
 upon and
 flatterers were
 never made
 confessors.

3164

It was a golden
 world borne up
 by love and
 just law.

3168

Phoroneus,
 3172 king of Argos,
 invented laws
 and sacrifices
 to Jupiter.

3176

Minos, king of
 3180 Crete,
 ordained laws
 against fools
 and robbers,

3184

and Mercury,
 king of Egypt,
 legislated for
 3188 merchants and
 standardized
 their weights
 and measures.

3153. for trouthe whet] quet H. 3168. be] with R.
 3172. First by H. 3175. tauoide] auoyde R.
 3182. al be H. 3183. Make] Made H.
 3187. As] And R—Lactance] Bochas H.

And for his wisdam & excellent kunnyng,
Off olde poetis, that whilom wer so wise,
He callid was god off marchaundise.

3192

Solon
established
excellent laws
for the
Athenians and
hated tyrants.

Solon also the beste lawes made,
As writ Valeri, hymself to magnifie:
Athenye[n]ses theroff wer ful glade,
His gret[e] wisdam whan thei dede espie;
Thei fond theryn so moch[e] policie.
And he was redi euer to debate
Ageyn tirantis, so sore he dede hem hate.

3196

Lycurgus made
his people
swear to keep
the law while
he was away on
a pilgrimage,

Kyng Ligurgus eek whilom dede his cure
To make lawes to comoun auantage,
And that thei sholde perpetueli endure,
He made his peeple be sworn, off eueri age,
Whil that he wente out on pilgrymage,
Fro poynt to poynt to keepe hem in certeyn,
Onto tyme that he cam hom ageyn.

3200

3204

and since his
laws were so
useful and
important, he
preferred not
to return home
again, so that
his statutes
might never be
broken.

And for his lawes wer off gret substaunce
And profitable to eueri comounte,
He ches to lyue in exil and penaunce,
Neuer to resorte ageyn to his contre,*
That his statutis be eternyte

3208

Sholde nat be broke, as ye han herd toforn,
Bi the convencioun to which that thei wer sworn.

3212

Before he died
he commanded
that his bones
should be cast
far out into
the sea,

To comoun profit had he such tendirnesse,
That he forsook his kyngdam & kenreede
[To] lyue in exill, his story berth witnesse.
But or he deied, as he lay bedreede,
He bad his bonys sholde be cast in deede
Amyd the se, ferr out fro the stronde,
That his statutis myhte in ther strengthe stonde.

3216

3220

that there might
be no occasion
for his subjects
to be false to
their vow.

He eschewed euerich occasioun,
As [a] thyng hatful which was nat fair,
That his forsaid[e] roial myhti toun
Sholde breke ther oth because off his repair.
But touchyng that, he put hem in despair,
Cast hym neuer resorten in ther dawes,
List thei wolde breke the sentence off his lawes.

3224

3194. Valeri writ R. 3195. Athemeses R.

3198. euer he was redy for to R.

3200. Kyng] om. H — Licurgus P.

3210. his] this H — contre] cite B, J, R, cite H 5, cite P.

3219. from R, J, R 3, P, frome H.

¶ An exclamacioun of Bochas ageyn thextorsions
& oppressions of þe poraill of Rome.¹

JOHN BOCHAS heer makith a digressioun,
And bi rebukying cast hym for tassaile
Thilke officeres that wer in Rome toun,
Which bextorsioun oppressid the poraile, —
And ageyn iuges also off Itaile,
A[nd] namli them, that for lucre & meede
Sett trouthe aside & took off it noon heede.

3228 John Bochas
digresses here,
rebuking the
dishonest
officials and
judges of Italy
and Rome, who
oppressed the
poor
3232

He maketh ageyn hem an exclamacioun,
Such as to vertu wer contrarious,
And vnder colour and occasioun
Off ther office list to be lecherous,
Lik condiciowned onto Appius,
And fynali, as it was afftir seene,
Fals in ther domys & off ther liff oncleene.

and took
advantage of
their position to
be licentious,
like Appius,
false in their
decisions and
foul in their
lives.
3236
3240

O, quod Bochas, O trouthe, O thou Iustise,
Which in your noblesse whilom dede excell,
Wher in effect is now your exercise?
Wher is your wonyng? alas, wher do ye duell?
Off your practik ful fewe men can tell,
So ferr put bak is now your disciplyne,
Your kyn exiled and your noble lyne!

"Where are
Truth and
Justice now,"
he exclaimed,
3244 "Where do they
dwell? Few
men can tell
of their
practise.

Aduocatis that now doon ocupie
Your olde sees & placis ful roiall,
Al to falsheed ther wittis thei applie, —
Such couetise now regneth ouer all!
Causes off cyuyle & causes cremynall
Ther doomys take, wher thei be fals or trewe,
Al afftir will be statutis chaungid newe.

3248
[p. 184] "Advocates
apply their wits
only to false-
hood, and
judgments are
wholly depen-
3252 dent on will.

Ther been eek other callid accessours,
Sittyng be iuges to yeuen hem counsail,
Which may ful weel be callid raueynours;
For thei nat laboure but for ther owne auail.
A noubre off robbours folwe at ther tail,
To pile the peeple, as ye han herd toform,
Bare as a sheep that is but newe shorn.

3256 "Assessors, who
give counsel to
judges, might
better be called
raviners; their
labour is all for
their own profit.

3260

3233. &] or H, R.

3249. doon] doth R. 3253. &] or R. 3259. for] om. R.

3260. ther] the R.

¹ "Here Bochas makith an exclamacioun of the extorcioun of the officers of Rome," MS. J, leaf 75 verso.

"No more is to
be said than that
Truth stands
desolate, and
righteousness
dare not
complain.

Ther is no mor in this mateer to seyne,
Sauff onli this: trouthe stant desolat, 3264
[And] rihtwisnesse to no wiht dar compleyne,
With wrong oppressid, wepyng disconsolat.*
Wherfor, ye Pryncis, that sit in hih estat,
Such thyng tamende but ye bet heed list take, 3268
God shal with you a ful hard reknyng make.

"Princes, if you
do not reform
these things,
God will make
a hard reckon-
ing with you.

Your office is in your magnificence
Twen man and man all wronges to redresse,
And wher a mateer is ageyn conscience, 3272
It to refourme onli off rihtwisnesse;
To stonde be trouthe, meyntene no falsnesse,
And lete wis counseil such materes examyne
Or ye off haste theron* determyne. 3276

"He will reward
you as you
deserve!"

Hath such thynges in *your* mynde among;
Thynk God will quite lik as ye disserue.
Ye spotte your noblesse iff that ye do wrong,
His suerd off punshyng dredith or it kerue. 3280
Lat your resoun & conscience conserue
Your noble estatis, & thynk, lik *your* werkyng,
The Lord off you will axen a reknyng.

[Off Alcibiades exiled and aftir brent in his bedde.] ¹

After this,
Alcibiades,
fairest of men,
appeared to
Bochas. He
was strong,
wise and
discreet, born of
high lineage,
popular, brave,
and a great
orator.

AFFTIR other bat put hemsilf in pres, 3284
Tofor Bochas ther compleyntis to discure,
Cam off Athenys Alcibiades,
That tyme a-lyue the fairest creature.
And as it is remembred be scripture, 3288
He was discreet and wis at all assaies,
And oon the strengest & manli in his daies.
He was first born off riht hih lynage,
Aboue all other off most semlynesse, 3292
Weel proporciowned and hardi off corage,
Loued & weel fauoured for his gret fairnesse,
Famous in knyththod for his worthynesse,
Sotil wittid, and koude bi eloquence 3296
Moche comprehende vnder short sentence.

3265. to no wiht dar] dare nouth R.

3266. disconsolat] desolate R, & disconsolat B.

3275. such mateers wise counsaile H, R 3.

3276. theron] the trouthe B.

3290. And] om. R. 3292. semblynesse R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 77 recto.

His witt enclyned to manyfold sciences,
 Hadde off kunnyng a passyng retentiff,
 Loued clerkis, & fond hem ther despencis,
 Such as in practik he sauh most inuentiff.
 To reede in bokis reioished al his liff,
 Kepte what he radde in his memoriall,
 And off wis counseil was noon to hym egall.

3300 His retentive
 mind turned
 to many
 branches of
 learning; a
 patron of
 scholars and
 great reader,
 no one could
 equal him in
 wise counsel.
 3304

An* vncl he hadde Icallid Pericles,*
 Which stood in daunger, off excessiff spendyng;
 Yit in his youthe this Alcibiades,
 Seyng his vncl pensiff in lokyng,
 Caste off wisdam to remedie that thyng;
 And for tasswage his hertis heuynesse,
 Gaff hym this counseil bi gret avisynesse:

3308 His uncle
 Pericles once
 stood in danger
 of indictment
 for exceeding
 the amount
 allowed him
 in repairing
 the temple of
 Minerva; but
 Alcibiades,
 seeing him
 downcast, said,

First to reherse how the mateer stood,
 And off his vnclis woful hih distresse.
 Ther was to hym delyuered a summe off good,
 To repare the temple off a goddesse
 Callid Mynerua; but for the gret excesse
 Off his dispendyng*, he stood sumwhat in dreede
 Touchyng thacounte, which he mut yilde in deede.

3312

3316

Alcibiades heerupon musyng,
 To his vncl gaff counseil in sentence.
 "Vncl," quod he, "lat be al your thynkyng,
 And for yoursilff[e] shapeth this diffence,
 Nat for tacounte — be mene off your prudence,
 Aform prouyded, with face & cheer onfeyned,
 To such duresse that ye be nat constreyned."

3320 "Do not
 render any
 account unless
 you are com-
 pelled."

3324

And whan Pericles* his counseil aduertisith,
 Fond to his worshep it was resonable;
 And bi good leiser hymself ful weel aysith,
 And bi prouysiou, prudent and notable,
 Saued his estat from ech thyng repreuable,
 So that he stood[e], touchyng this mateer,
 As for acomptis out off al daunger.

3328 And Pericles,
 following this
 advice, took
 care so to
 arrange his
 affairs that
 he finally
 escaped all
 danger of
 reproof.

3332

3305. An] And B — called R — Pericles B, R, H.

3312. the] this R.

3317. dispendyng] dispense B, dispensis R, dispencis J,
 dispenses P.

3321. al] om. R.

3326. whan] om. H — Pericles B, H, R.

3332. accowntis H.

Alcibiades
ruled the
Athenians both
in war and
peace, and was
admiral of their
navy.

Alcibiades, off Athene cheeff capteyn,
Fro day to day wex up to gret encres,
Such another was ther nowher seyn,
Them to gouerne bothe in werre and pes.
And al the cite bi assent hym ches,
Off ther nauye in especial,
Vpon the se to been ther amyral.

[p. 185]

3336

As governor of
the Catanæans
he made war on
Syracuse,

For his knythod thei sent hym out a-ferre,
Off Cathenois to be ther gouernour,
Geyn Siracusanes for to gynne a werre.
First ther receyued with glorie* & gret honour,
But in the eende off his gret labour,
Fortune that is ay variant & onstable,
Was to this duc nat founde fauourable.

3340

3344

but was recalled
on a charge of
treason and
divested of all
his offices.

He was accusid to them off the toun,
Which in Athenys hadde gouernaunce,
That he was gilty in parti off tresoun.
Bi them reuoked, for al his gret puissaunce
Off capteynship, and bi ther ordynaunce
And Fortunys fals mutabilite,
Onwarli pryued from al dignyte.

3348

3352

He then went
into voluntary
exile to save
his life; for the
Athenians
desired to offer
up his head to
their gods.

But for hymself[e] thus he gan provide,
Wente into exil nat ferr fro that cuntre
Into a* cite that callid was Elide,
Ther for to ha[ue] fredam and liberte,
And off his liff to stonde in surete;
For in Athen thei wolde haue hym ded,
Onto ther goddis to offren vp his hed.

3356

3360

Soon afterwards
he went to
Sparta, and
there heard that
through the
misadventure of
three captains

But whan he was off ther entent certeyn,
To Lacedemoyne he took the riht[e] way,
And be relacioun ther he herde seyn,
How Thathenyenses wer put at affray
In a bataile vpon a certyen day,
Which that thei heeld, to ther aduersite,
Geyn Cathenois, as thei fauht on the se.

3364

the Athenians
had been
defeated at sea
by the
Catanæans.

But the cause off this disconfiture,
As was told to Alcibiades,
Was bi thre capteyns, thoruh ther mysauenture,
Which in ther ledyng wer founde rech[e]les.

3368

3333. Albiciades of Athenes H.

3334. to gret is repeated in R.

3343. gloire B.

3355. nat] and R.

3356. Into a] In ta B.

The cheeff off them named Demostenes,
The tother callid, the stori tellith* vs,
The ton Niceas, the tother Eurilocus.

3372

Alcibiades, hauyng heeroff tidying,
Tauenge his wrong put hymselff in pres;
Off Lacedemoyne he goth first to the kyng,
Which off trouthe was callid Agides,
Besechyng hym to graunte to his encres
Certeyn soudiours out off his cuntre,
For to werreie Athenes* the cite.

So, in order to
avenge his
3376 wrong, Alci-
biades besought
Agis, king of
Sparta, to lend
him an army
to make war
on Athens.

3380

Thus he wex strong, off noble prouidence,
Hadde gret peeples vnder his gouernaunce,
And lik a duk, maad strong in his diffence
Be peeples gadred to his obeisaunce,
That other pryncis, which wer off hih puissaunce,
Gan haue envie, off wilful frowardnesse,
And to maligne ageyn his hih noblesse.

Thus he grew
strong, and was
envied because
3384 of his bravery
and high re-
nown, as always
happens; for no
man is free
from the slander
of venomous
tongues.

3388

For seelde or neuer in any regioun,
Prowesse off armys, noblesse off cheualrie,
Encres in riches, report off hih renoun,
Fame off kunnyng in craft or in clergie
May nowher duelle withoute sum envie,
From whos malice, as folk expert mai see,
Sauf onli wrechis no man hath liberte.

3392

For which this prync, as put is in memorie,
Escapit nat, for al his hih parage,
But that summe envied at his glorie;
For in this liff no man hath auauntage
Ageyn tungen nor odious fals language.
To stoppe such venym, this the beste obstacle,
That men with suffraunce tempre ther triacle.

3396

3400

The cleer prowesse off Alcibiades
Steyned the noblesse off other pryncis all;
His eure hym reised up to so gret encres,
To the hiest throne off Fortunys hall.
Such fatal grace is onto hym fall,

His clear
prowess shad-
3404 owed the
nobility of all
other princes;
no one equalled
him in knight-
hood.

3372. Domestenes R.

3373. tellith] techith B.

3374. Eurilocus] Lamachus P.

3377. he] om. H.

3381. Athenes] Athenos B, Athenois R.

3385. Be] The R.

3389. This stanza is marked with a scrawl of approval in margin, J.

That in tho daies, pleyntli this no fable, 3408
Ther was in knythod noon to hym resemblable.

Yet the
Spartans
sought to eclipse
his worthiness
by false report

In his exil so cleer his renoun shon,
And thoruh Grece gaff as gret brihtnesse
As doth a rubi aboue ech other ston: 3412
Yit for teclipse & shadwe his worthynesse,
Lacedemonois dede ther besynesse,
Such as myhte nat* to his noblesse atteyne,
Bi fals report his renoun to restreynne. 3416

and laid traps
to take him
unawares and
bring him to
ruin; but he
always managed
to escape,

Await was leid to take* hym at myscheff, [p. 186]
And many treynys wer serchid out & souht,
Off entent taput hym at repreeff.
But al that euer ageyn hym thei ha[ue] wrouht, 3420
At the eende ther purpos cam to nouht;
For God prouydeth off his magnificence
Ageyn such malice to sauen innocence.

although his
life was con-
stantly in
danger.

He was likli tafalle in gret daunger, 3424
Lacedemonois gan at hym so disdeyne
Because his honour & noblesse shon so cleer,
That to his fon it was a dedli peyne.
And thus his liff stood in noun certeyne; 3428
For al-be-it he manli was and wis,
He knew nothyng ther purpos nor malice.

To his
misfortune
he had
a love affair
with the queen,
who warned
him of his
enemies and
advised him
to flee to
Athens. There
he took no
revenge,

He hadde almost iwarned be* to late,
And lik tastonde in gret perplexite. 3432
And mor his grace & fortune to abate,
Bi thoccasioun off his gret beute, r
He with the queen was wexen ful pryue;
For in hir grace so weel stood ther non, 3436
Which gaff hym warnyng off them that wer his fon.

And bi the counsail onli off the queen,
Fro Lacedemoyne he wisli took his fliht
Toward Athenys, & thouhte he wolde seen 3440
His owne cuntre, ful lik a manli knyht.
And thouh thei hadde nat gouerned hem a-riht

3408. this is R. 3409. in knythod was noon H
3415. nat myhte B, R, J.
3417. to take] tataka B. 3418. wer] om. R.
3420. ageyn] geyn R. 3421. ther] the R.
3424. tafalle] to fall R, H, J, R 3, P.
3425. is misplaced at end of stanza; correction indicated, H.
3428. no certeyn R 3, no certaine P. 3430. nor] & H.
3431. be] bien B, ben H 5. 3437. them] other R.
3440. thouhte] thouh R. 3442. thouh] thought R.

- Towardis hym, beyng in distresse,
 Tauenge his wrong he dede hem no duresse. 3444
 For he thouhte it was ageyn nature,
 To be vengable or shewe his cruelte
 Bi thoccasioun off any auenture,
 Or gynne a werre vpon his cuntre; 3448
 His natiff blood meued hym to pite,
 And off verrai natural ientillesse
 Was debonaire geyn ther onkynd[e]nesse.
 The cas was this, for short conclusioun,
 How kyng Darie with gret apparaile 3452
 Thouhte to werreie, off indignacioun,
 Them off Athenys and ther toun tassaile.
 And in his purpos proudli to preuaile, 3456
 Thesiffernes, a prynce off gret puissaunce,
 Off Daries* power hadde al the gouernaunce.
 Fynal cause and ground off al this werre,
 That Darius gan on hem so hastili, 3460
 And that he sente his puissaunce fro so ferre
 For to destroie Athenys vttilri,
 Was to hold up and sustene the parti
 Off Lacedemoyne, which off old hatreede 3464
 Wer euer envious them for toppresse in deede.
 But be mene off Alcibiades,
 And bi his trete foundid on prudence,
 Thesiffernes enclyned to the pes,
 Therbi in parti tappese his violence. 3468
 And al was doon off noble prouidence,
 And fro the place to which he was exilid,
 He to Athenys sholde be reconciled. 3472
 Onto the cite he dede signefie
 How Darius hadde maad his ordenaunce,
 And bi his lettris he gan them specifie,
 Yiff thei wolde stonde at his gouernaunce, 3476
 To condescende, pleyntli in substaunce,
 He wolde laboure, and no lenger tarie,
 To make accord atwen hem & kyng Darie.

for he did not
believe it right
to make war on
his own country.

At that time
Darius was
preparing to
attack the
Athenians

in aid of
Sparta;

but with the
help of Alci-
biades, peace
was promised
by the Persian
general Tissa-
phernes, on
condition that
the Athenians
would do as
Alcibiades told
them.

3443. beyng] stoondyng R. 3444. duresse] distresse R.
 3451. geyn] ageyn R, H, H 5, again P.
 3455. tassaile] assaile H. 3456. his] om. R.
 3458. Daries] Darius B, Daryus H 5. 3461. frome H.
 3467. his] this R. 3469. tappese in party R.
 3473. the] this R. 3479. atwen] tween R.

In the city the
senators were
to have full
control,

This was the mene that he mente: 3480
Withynne Athenys that the senatours
Sholde off the cite, afftir ther entente,
Ha[ue] fulli lordshipe, and be ther gouernours.
But as cleer wethir troublid is with shours, 3484
Riht so vnwarli, withynne that roial toun,
Thoruh this trete fill a discencioun.

but the com-
mons, disdain-
ing such thral-
dom, recalled Al-
cibiades to restore
order.

The comowneris gan sodenli disdeyne 3488
To be so thrallid vnder subieccioun;
And so bassent the comouns dede ordeyne,
Onli tappese al fals discencioun,
For to reuoke ageyn into ther toun
Alcibiades, as thei thouhte it meete, 3492
Thoruh his prudence to sette hem in quyete.

He was made
duke again and
supported the
commons. The
senate fled,

First in his komyng, myn auctour doth reporte,
He was maad duk ageyn off that cite,
And gan the parti off comouns to supporte, 3496
And them restore to ther old liberte.
Wherthuruh the senat, dredying the comounte,
Fledde into exil ful ferr out off al pres,
Onli for dreed off Alcibiades. 3500

and the people
were brought
to the point
of yielding the
town to the
Spartans.

Thei stood that tyme in so gret disioynt, [p. 187]
Ther toun deuided and out of gouernaunce,
That thei wer brouht euene onto the poynt
To yolde the cite vnto thobeissance 3504
Of Lacedemoyne, thoruh ther vnhappi chaunce,
Withynne hemsilff[e] whan thei gan debate,
Vnto ther duk the senat bar such hate.

But Alcibiades,
chosen by the
commons as
their defender,
attacked the
Spartans on
the sea

But the comouns ches in ther diffence 3508
Alcibiades to gouerne that viage.
And to the se, with cost & gret dispence,
Withoute abood he holdeth his passage
In myhti shippis maad for auantage, 3512
Weel enarmyd, & caste, yif he myhte,
With Lacedemonios proudli for to fihte.

3486. this] his R — a] at R.

3490. al] as R.

3496. the] that R.

3499. into] in H — ful] om. H.

3503. onto] to R.

3504. To] Ta H — the] ther H.

3507. Vnto] Vndir R.

3510. dispence] expence R.

3513. enarmyd] armed R — &] om. H.

Thre myhti capteyns wern on the tother side,
 The first[e] Zestro, Bochas tellith thus,
 And the second that was ther lord & guide
 Callid Midare, the thridde Pharbanasus,
 On se and lond in armys ful pompous.
 But of his kniethod and magnanymyte
 Alcibiades took hem all[e] thre.

3516 and captured
 their three
 captains,
 Zestro,
 Mindarus and
 Pharnabazus,

Strong was the fihrt or that thei wer[e] take,
 Of al ther meyne away ther scaped non;
 The duk that day gan swich a slauhtre make
 Of hih prowessse vpon his mortal foon,
 Cast ouerboord almost euerichon,
 And aftir that, whan he cam to londe,
 A newe bataille met hym on the stronde,

3520

and destroyed
 all their men.

Swich wait was leid aboute hym environ
 Of his enmyes be sodeyn auenture.
 But of Athenys this myhti champioun,
 Which myhte in armys most souereynli endure,
 Made on his foon a [newe] disconfiture.
 Thus in short tyme this prince in his estaat
 On lond and se was twies laureat.

3524

3528

On landing he
 again defeated
 the enemy.

And aftir that, he list nat for to cesse
 Nor tabide the space off halff a day:
 The comoun proffit of his toun tencrese,
 Toward Asie he took the riht[e] way,
 And touns, castellis that wer take away,
 Which apertened to Athenys of riht,
 He gat ageyn, ful lik a manli kniht.

3536

After that he
 went to Asia
 and recaptured
 towns and
 castles that
 belonged to
 Athens

3540

Maugre all that to hym wer contrarye,
 Or wrouhte ageyn hym be rebelloun,
 Thoruhout [al] Asie in the land of Darie
 He knihtli brouht hem to subieccioun,
 Ageyn whos swerd halp no proteccioun.
 And fynal labour was off his entente,
 The comoun proffit off his toun taugmente.

3544

and brought
 their inhabi-
 tants again to
 subjection.

3548

3515. Thre] The H.

3517. ther] be H.

3518. Midarus P, Pharbanazus P.

3520. and] and of his R.

3523. non] nat oon H.

3532. myhte] myhty R.

3535. se] watir R, H, J, R 3, watyr H 5, water P.

3541. to] of R.

3546. to] in R.

Returning to
Athens, he
was received
with joy and
great honour.

And with this glorie and with this hih noblesse
He to Athenys repeired is ageyn;
And al the cite, with ioie & gret gladnesse, 3552
Cam out to meete hym upon a wol fair pleyn.
And that his triumphes sholde openli be seyn,
Bothe old & yong, with ful glad visages,
Of ther goddis brouht out the images. 3556

The people
cried, "Wel-
come, victorious
prince, our pro-
tector and
shield against
all violence."

This was the[r] cry & noise of al the pres:
"Victorious prince, whos triumphes marciall
Shal euer be songe with loude and newe encre
Tofor the goddis, which been inmortal, 3560
Wolkome, wolkome! our protectour, our wall,
Sheeld of our weelfare ageyn al violence,
Phebus of knihthod, & swerd of our diffence!"

By their strange
praise they
made him an
equal of the
gods,

Thus with ther goddis thei maden hym egall 3564
Bi vnkouth praisyng of paganysme rihtis,
Lik as he hadde be verray inmortal,
And sang refreites to comende his merites.
Tenhaunce his glorie* thei sette al ther delites, 3568
And with the liht[e] of eternal fame,
Sette up torchis tenlumyne with his name.

and hallowed
certain days in
honour of his
prowess, until
Fortune blinded
his eyes with
prosperity.

Thus certeyn daies thei halwed of entent,
Thoruh [al] the cite for his hih prowessse, 3572
Til Fortune hath his eyen blent
With newe fauour of worldli fals suetnesse.
For al hir* sugir is meynt with bittirnesse, —
A bait of hony, shad out at pryme face, 3576
With mortall venym hid vndir to mânace.

When he
thought he
stood highest
in her favour
she brought
misfortune on
his people.

For in his hiest clymyng up aloffte,
And in thascence of Fortunys wheel,
Aftir hir custum, as she hath ful ofte, 3580
Whan he best wende for tastonde weel,
She drouh hir fauour from hym euerideel,
Made the peeple vndir his obeissaunce
To falle in myscheeff for lak of gouernaunce. 3584

3557. the] ther R.

3560, 66. Immortal H.

3565. paganismes R.

3567. refrectis H.

3568. And tenhaunce R, P — gloire B — sette] om. H.

3575. hir] ther B.

3576. at] of R.

3581. for to astonde R.

Thus for this* duk Fortune gan to varie,
 And his noblesse go bak & eek faille,
 Whan kyng Cyrus, successour to Darie,
 Ful vnwarli fill on hym in bataille,
 And gan his knihtis proudli to assaille,
 Whan he dispurveid, void of prouidence,
 Was ouerleid to make resistance.

[p. 188] Made reckless
 by vainglory,
 he was
 defeated by
 King Cyrus,

3588

For fynalli this Alcibiades
 At myscheeff take, which he myhte nat recure,
 Whan thoruh veynglori he was maad rek[e]les
 His noble estat testablishe & assure.
 Lak of forsiht caused his disconfiture;
 And to ences of mor aduersite,
 Ban[y]shed ageyn out of his cite.

3592 and again
 banished from
 Athens.

3596

Thus diffacid and clipped was his glorie,
 His cite put in straunge gouernaunce
 Be Lacedemonoys aftir ther victorie,
 So that he knew no maner cheuisaunce
 To refourme his vnhappi chaunce,
 Sauf for refut, myn auctour doth reherse,
 How that he fledde onto the kyng of Perse.

3600 He fled for
 refuge to the
 king of Persia.

3604

From Athenys of newe he was exilled;
 And thretti personys, furious & vengable,
 Chose in that cite, as Bochas hath compiled,
 The toun gouerned, al-be thei wer nat able,
 Vsing a maner hatful and repreuable,
 Thoruh ther rauyne temporisshe ther cite,
 A thyng most odious to eueri comounte.

3608 and Athens was
 then governed
 by the Thirty
 Tyrants, who
 impoverished
 the city through
 their greed.

3612

A worm of dreed was bred up in ther herte,
 Which suffred nat them to lyue in pes,
 Among themsilff[e] whan thei dide aduerte
 The grete prudence of Alcibiades,
 How in manhod he was pereles,
 List he wold aftir, for al ther multitude,
 Knihtli aquite ther ingratitude.

3616 They began to
 fear Alcibiades,
 lest afterwards
 he should
 repay their
 ingratitude in
 kind,

And of assent tabreggen his lyff daies,
 Thei ageyn hym of malis han conspired,
 Afftir his exil, to maken no dellaies

3620 and conspired to
 murder him
 after his exile.

3585. this] the B. 3591. ouer ladde R.

3596. disconfiture H. 3604. for] to R.

3608. that] ther R. 3611. ther] þe H.

3619. aquite] aquiete R.

3606. of] om. H.

For tacomplisshe that thei long han desired,
 With brennyng hate ther hertis falsli fired, 3624
 To moordre benvie, causeles ageyn [al] riht,
 Alcibiades, the noble worthi kniht.

Thus the day
 of his death
 approached.
 No prince can
 provide
 against
 false con-
 spirators.

Thus the tyme approchid and the date,
 Term afforn set be constellacioun 3628
 Of his parodie and his lyuys fate,
 Which was concludid, as maad is mencion,
 Bi cruel moordre to his destruccioun.
 Alas, what prince, with gold or soudiours, 3632
 May hym provide geyn fals conspiratours!

He was pursued
 constantly from
 place to place,
 and his enemies
 finally fell upon
 him at night
 and burned
 him in his bed.

Fortune of newe gan at hym enchace;
 From hir treynys that he nat scape myhte,
 Daili pursuede fro place ay onto place, 3636
 Thoruh Perse and Mede, thouh he wer out of siht.
 Til that his enmyes fill on hym be nihte,
 Slepynge, alas, to soone thei wer sped:
 Whan thei hym fond, thei brente hym in his bed. 3640

It was too
 horrible a
 deed,—
 such a good
 knight to be
 taken in his
 bed and con-
 sumed by fire!

Thus be moordre ther purpos* was acheuyd, —
 Alas, it was to horrible a deede,
 So good a kniht, so weel in armys preuyd,
 So renommede, so famous in manheede, 3644
 For to be brent among the coles rede!
 First vnwarli in his bed Itake,
 And so consumyd among the smokes blake.

But this was
 his end; and
 he flew with
 two wings to
 the Palace of
 Fame.

This was the eende of Alcibiades, 3648
 Which in knihthod was most souereyne;
 In werre a leoun, and a lamb in pes,
 As Mars victorious, his fate so dide ordeyne.
 To famys paleis he fley with wynges tweyne, 3652
 Sone to Mynerva, to speke of hih prudence,
 And lik Mercurie be notable elloquence.

¶ An exclamacion of pe deth of Alcibiades.¹

O Fates, why
 did you allow
 him to burn on
 the red coals?
 He who had
 lived so short
 a term!

O FATAL sustren, which span the lyues threede
 So short a terme; whi dide ye determyne 3656
 To suffre hym brenne among the coles rede?
 Ye wer to hasti to breken and ontwyne

3624. ther] the H — falsli] fully R.

3629. and] and of R, H. 3635. From] For R — nat] na R.

3641. purpos ther moordre, correction indicated B.

3647. smokes] coles R. 3652. fleih R.

¹ "Here Bochas makith an exclamacioun vpon the deth of Alcibiades," MS. J. leaf 78 recto.

His web of knihtehod, that thoruh the world* dide
shyne,

And caste of noblesse his bemys out most cleer; 3660

Alas, that euer he fill in your daungeer!

O, out on Stix, and out on Attropos,

[p. 189]

Out on Styr
and out on
Atropos!

That han of malis slayn so good a kniht!

Out on you thre, that keepe your-silff so cloos, 3664

Out on you,
three daughters
of the dark
Night! Out on
you, Lethel!

Douhtres Icallid of the dirke niht!

And thou, Letum, that queyntest eek the liht

Of Alcibiades, merour & lanterne,

To speke in knihtod how men sholde gouerne, 3668

Ye slen the worthi, & wrechchis ye doon spare!

Torcites lyueth, Ector is slayn in deede,

Your funeral smokis makþ rewmys now so bare,

To race vp* cedris, ther braunchis may nat sprede, 3672

You slay the
worthy and
spare wretches.
Your funereal
smokes lay
realms desolate,
fostering
cattifs and
letting the
worthy die.

Ye palle the laurer, ye make the firses seede.

Ful litil thank in kyngdamys ye disserue,

Kaitiffs to fostre, and do the worthi sterue!

Alicibiades is passed into fate,

3676

Liht of knihtod lith clipped in the shade;

The Parchas sustren to soone sette his date,

Of hih noblesse to make the laurer fade.

Lacedemoyns* of his deth wer glade,

3680

Funeral fyr his bodi hath diffied,

For hih prowesse his soule stelled.

Alcibiades has
passed into
fate; the Parcae
allowed him to
die too soon;
but the Spar-
tans were glad.

[¶] Lenvoye.

ALAS, this tragedie doth myn herte bleede,

Mi penne quake of routhe & of pite,

3684

In my writyng whan that I tak heede,

To seen the straunge feerful dyuersite

Of al worldli vnseur felicite,

How from ther sees, shortli to comprehende,

3688

Froward Fortune doth princis doun descende.

Alcibiades, of corage & of manheede,

As is rehersid in bookis ye* may see,

Of gentillesse and of goodliheede,

3692

Alas, my
heart bleeds
when I see
how insecure is
the world's
felicity.

Alcibiades,
most famous of
goodness and
beauty, bounty,
prudence and
magnanimity,

3659. thoruh the world] the word thoruh B.

3660. bemys] om. H (space left).

3662. O] om. R, P — 2nd out] om. R — Antropos H, Atrapos P, Atrapos J.

3666. Lethum P. 3667. Of] And H. 3672. vp] out B.

3677. lith] lyht R. 3680. Lacedemoyns B.

3681. diffied H, R. 3691. ye] as ye B, H.

Of semlynesse, of fredam & bounte,
 Of hih prudence and magnanymyte
 Was most famous, as auctours hym comende,
 Yit from his seete Fortune made hym descende. 3696

governing
 Athens and
 dreaded by
 all the enemies
 of the city —
 yet when at
 the height of
 his glory
 Fortune made
 him descend
 from his throne.

Al the peeple, bothe of Perse and Mede,
 Whil he governid Athenys the cite,
 Stood in his daunger & gan his suerd to dreede;
 And al that wern rebel to his contre, 3700
 He chastised hem in ther most cruelte.
 But whan his fame gan hiest up tascende,
 Doun from hir* wheel Fortune made hym descende.

Moordre and tresoun with pretence freendliheed, 3704
 Outward fair cheer, couert iniquite,
 Plesaunce in speche, & vndir that falsheed,
 Hony shad out, sharp tailed lik a bee,
 Song of Syrenes to drowne men in the se, 3708
 In oon combyned, ther malis can extende
 To cause princis doun from ther sees descende.

Noble Princes,
 secure your-
 selves against
 treason, and
 remember in
 your prosperity
 that he who
 sits highest
 is most ready to
 descend.

Noble Pryncis, that seen so moche and reede,
 Remembryng stories of antiquite, 3712
 Afforn prouidyng that tresoun nat proceede,
 Beth ay most dreedful in [hih] prosperite,
 Lat othris fallyng a merour to you bee.
 The tourn of Fortune al auctours reprehende, 3716
 Wher who sit hiest is rediest to descende.

¶ A Chapitle of wordly folk wich desire to be magnified.¹

Worldly folk
 desire above
 all other things
 to have power
 and to climb
 up to the
 highest place in
 wealth and
 reputation.

AFFT[ER] this processe, yif ye list to lere,
 Lich as Iohn Bochas maketh mencion,
 That worldli folk most souereynli desire 3720
 To haue in lordshipe gret exaltacioun,
 And up to clymbe in ther entencioun
 Of worldli worshepe* to the hiest place,
 Al erthli tresour attonys to enbrace. 3724

3703. hir] his B.

3704. pretence] pretence of H, pretended P. In MS. J, margin (78 recto) opposite this stanza, "a notable ver[ity]," written in a seventeenth century hand.

3721. lordshipe] worshipp H.

3723. worshepe] worshepes B, R 3, princis H.

¹ "Here Bochas writeth ageyn the desires of the people," MS. J. leaf 78 recto.

The feruent flawme of ther gredi desir[e]s
 In mekil gadryng fynt no suffisance;
 Ther hungri etik kyndelethe so the fires
 Of auarice be long contynuaunce,
 That her thrust of worldli habundaunce
 On Tantalus ryuer abraideth euer in oon,
 Drownid in drynkyng, & deeme ther part is non.

The hot
 flame of their
 greedy desire
 for riches is
 like the thirst
 of Tantalus:
 the more they
 drink the
 fiercer their
 craving; the
 higher the
 water the
 greater their
 fear of an ebb.

Ther may no tresour ther dropesie weel staunche; 3732
 The mor thei drynke the mor thei thruste in deede.
 In Thagus floodis the depper that thei launche,
 The gretter drynesse doth in ther brestes* breede.
 The hier water, an ebbe most thei dreede; 3736
 Fals indigence ther herte hath so confoundid,
 At fullest sees thei seeme ther barge is groundid.

Thus ech man wolde to gret richesse atteyne; [p. 190]
 With suffisaunce but fewe hold hem content; 3740
 Who most haboundeth, now rather wil compleyne
 For lak of good — alas, how thei be blent!
 Wher shal ther gadryng, wher shal ther good be spent?
 Sum oon par cas* shal hem therof discharge, 3744
 Whom thei most hate, & spende it out at large.

Few men are
 content with
 enough. The
 richest com-
 plain most
 of poverty,
 and yet it may
 be that their
 money will be
 taken from
 them and spent
 by some one
 whom they
 most hate.

Withynne a bodi, but* litil of stature,
 Corages growe up to gret magnificence,
 Which up tascende do ther besi cure, 3748
 And in ther clymyng & transitorie assence,
 Hauyng an hope of worldli apparence,
 Lich as nothyng ther puissaunce myht trouble,
 Nothyng aduerting how that Fortune is double. 3752

It seems to
 them as if noth-
 ing could impair
 their worldly
 power; they
 forget that
 Fortune is
 double.

Summe set ther ioie in conquest and in werris,
 Tenbrace al erthe vndir ther puissaunce,
 Lik as thei myhte reche aboue the sterris,
 To brynge down heuene vnto ther obeissaunce. 3756
 But yif ther poweer wer peised in ballaunce,
 And countirweied a-riht in ther memorye,
 Thei sholde weel fynde that al is but veynglorie.

Some are for
 wars and
 conquest,—as if
 they could
 reach above
 the stars; but
 if their power
 were rightly
 weighed they
 would find it
 only vainglory.
 What do their
 luxuries and
 vicious com-
 panions avail
 them?

What may auaille hem ther fethirbeddis softe, 3760
 Shetis of Reynys, longe, large & wide,

3727. hungri] gredy H. 3735. brestes] hertis B — breede]
 bleede H.

3740. hold them but fewe R. 3744. par cas] parchas B.

3746. but] ful B, J. 3753. ioie] loyes H.

3756. vnto] to R. 3761. reynys R, Reyns H.

Duyers deuises or clothes chaunged ofte,
 Or vicious mene walking be ther side, —
 Void of vertu, ambitious in ther pride, 3764
 Which causeth princis, be report of swich fame,
 For ther mysleuyng to han an heuy name.

For their
 idleness and
 lust and their
 support of vice
 and sustaining
 of liars, God
 will not suffer
 them to last
 long.

And thus for lak of vertuous dilligence,
 Thoruh fals luxure and froward idilnesse, 3768
 And upon flatereris thoutragous expence,
 Support of wrong oppressing rihtwisesse,
 Wher lesyngmongeres haue an interesse,
 Whom to susteene whan princis do þer cure, 3772
 God wil nat suffre that thei shal long endure.

The office of
 princes is to
 maintain riht,
 to relieve and
 not oppress the
 poor and to
 temper
 vengeance with
 mercy.

Offise of princis is to supporte riht,
 His suerd of knihthod fro wrongis to restreyne,
 The poore releuyng, toppresse hem nat with myht, 3776
 His olde seruantes weel preved nat disdeyne,
 His hasti rigour and his vengauunce sodeyne
 Lat merci tempre, to doom or he proceede,
 And God shal quite hym whan he hath most neede. 3780

¶ A Chapitle of men doing Such thing as þey be
 dispo[s]ed to.¹

Bochas tells us
 that nothing
 may avail more
 to virtue than
 industry. Each
 man is glad to
 do that for
 which he has
 most talent.

MYN auctour Bochas makth a *rehersaile*,
 In eschewyng of froward idilnesse,
 That onto vertu may [no thyng] mor auail
 Than* dilligent labour and honest bisynesse; 3784
 And so concludyng, ful pleyntli doth expresse,
 Ech man reioyssheth (this sentence is nat glosid)
 To doon swich thyng to whiche he [is] disposid.

Some work in
 astronomy
 or prove them-
 selves in war-
 like deeds, and
 others rejoice
 in eloquence or
 study philos-
 ophy and
 poetry.

Summe ha[ue] ioie be heuenli influence 3788
 To knowe the cours aboue celestiaill;
 And summe of knihthod do ther dilligence
 To preue themsilff in* actis marciall.
 And summe reioisshe, in ther entent fynall, 3792
 In elloquence, summe in philosophie,
 Summe, aboue all, to stodie in poetrie.

3763. mene] meyny P.

3768. luxury H. 3774. Thoffice H. 3779. he] ye H.

3783. no thyng] om. R, J, H 5 — may no thyng] nought may P.

3784. Than] Good B, R, J, H 5. 3787. to whiche] as R.

3790. do] to do R. 3791. in] be B. 3793. 2nd in] & in H.

¹ "Here Iohn Bochas spekith ageyn Idelnesse rehercyng how
 sum men haue ioie in o science and sum in anothir," MS. J. leaf
 78 verso.

The hardi kniht is seruauunt to Seynt George,
 Meuyng of planetis sercheth thastronomeer,
 Martis smyth laboureth in his forge,
 Harneis of steel mak[e]th tharmoreer;
 But the deuisour, be dilligence entieer,
 Be fressh contreuyng, out of the old entaille
 Fynt newe deuises of plate & eek of maille.

3796 The knight
 serves St.
 George; the
 astronomer
 searches the
 moving of the
 planets, the
 armourer con-
 trives harnesses
 of steel.

The laboreer set hooli his plesaunce
 To tilthe of lond in tyme to sowe his greyn,
 Tencrese his seed be yeerli habundaunce,
 And that his plouh laboure nat in veyn,
 Castyng his sesouns of drouht & eek of reyn;
 And poetis to sitte in ther librarie
 Desire of nature, and to be solitarie.

3804 The labourer
 has joy in
 tilling the land,
 and poets
 of their nature
 desire to be
 solitary.

Swich as men loue, such thyng bei vndirtake:
 Fissh or foule or hunte with ther houndis;
 Summe of wolles sondri clothes make;
 Be philisophre[s] was founde out first þe groundis, 3812
 And of al studie thei sette out first þe boundis,
 Caused poetes, pleynli to concluden,
 Out of al pres to lyue in solitude.

3808 What men love,
 they undertake,
 — to fish or
 fowl or hunt,
 to be tailors
 or philosophers;
 but poets must
 live in solitude.

Logiciens delite* in argumentis, [p. 191]
 Philisophres in vertuous lyuyng,
 And legistris, folwyng the[r] ententis,
 Gretli reioisshe in lucre and* wynnyng.
 Phececiens trauaile for getyng,*
 And of poetis, this the sotil fourme,
 Be newe invenciouu thynges to transfourme.

3816 Logicians
 delight in argu-
 ment, philo-
 sophers in
 virtuous life,
 legists and
 physicians in
 lucre and gain,
 and poets in
 transforming
 things by new
 invention.

Poetis sholde esche[w] al idilnesse,
 Walke be ryuers and wellis cristallyne,
 To hih mounteyns a-morwe ther cours up dresse,
 The mist deffied whan Phebus first doth shyne,
 Studie in bookis of moral disciplyne,
 Nothyng coueite, but sette ther entent,
 With moderat foode for to be content.

3824 Poets should*
 walk by crystal
 springs and
 climb high
 mountains at
 sunrise; they
 should study
 hard and be
 content with
 moderate food.

3797. Marcis R.

3798. Harneis] hands H. 3808. and] om. H.

3809. Swich] Suche R, H.

3810. hunte] huntyn H, to honten R, to huntun J.

3816. delite] delite hem B.

3818. folwyng] folwen H — ther] the J, H 5, R.

3819. and] and in B, H, R 3, H 5.

3820. getyng] wynnyng B. 3825. up] om. R.

Their chief labour is to reprove vices, not to be rudely offensive or to injure men, but always to conclude with virtue.

Ther cheeff labour is vicis to reprove
With a maner couert symylitude,
And non estat with ther langage greeve
Bi no rebukyng of termys dul and rude;
What-euer thei write, on vertu ay conclude,
Appeire no man in no maner wise:
This thoffise of poetis that be wise.

3832

3836

¶ A chapitle of þe gouernance of Poetis.

Poets should be secluded from the tumult of the world and live according to their means and by the support of princely patrons.

TO descryue the disposicioun
Of al poetis be old ordynaunce, —
Thei shold be quiette fro worldli mocion,
And it sequestre out of ther remembraunce,
Fare compotent vnto ther sustenaunce,
Drynk wyn among* to quike ther dilligence,
Support of princis to fynde hem ther dispenche.

3840

They have neither land nor wealth; and when their purses are empty they fail in countenance. The support of princes is the best recompense of their sorrows.

For thei that lakke lond & pocessioun,
And can of lucre no maner cheuisaunce,
Ther coffres void, ther purs turnid up-so-doun,
And wante vitaille to fynde hem in substaunce,
Ther corage dullith, thei faile contenaunce, —
What mihte beste ther sorwes recompence?
Support of princis to fynde hem ther dispenche.

3844

3848

Lords have power, churchmen gold, knights and merchants are well able to look out for themselves, but poor poets now-a-days may go begging.

Lordis in erthe ha[ue] domynacioun;
Men of the cherche of gold haue habundaunce;
The kniht get good[e] thoruh his hih renoun;
Marchauntis with wynnyng ha[ue] souereyn aqueyn-
taunce:

3852

But [poor] poetis (God sheeld hem fro myschaunce!)
May now-adaies for ther impotence,
For lakke of support go begge ther dispenche.

3856

Dante, Virgil, Petrarch, Chaucer, — all prospered; for they had the support of princes.

Daunt in Itaille, Virgile in Rome toun,
Petrak in Florence hadde al his plesaunce,
And prudent Chaucer in Brutis Albion
Lik his desir fond vertuous suffisaunce,
Fredam of lordshepe weied in ther ballaunce,
Because thei flourede in wisdom and science,
Support of princis fond hem ther dispenche.

3860

3864

3831. a] om. R.

3837. *This chapter (lines 3837-3871) is omitted in H, R, J, H 5, R 3.*

3842. among] competent B.

3855. poor is supplied from MSS. R 2, H 3, H 4.

O welle of fredam, enclyne thyn eris doun,
 And of thi bounte yiue sum attendaunce,
 To heere of merci my supplicacioun,
 In releuyng of myn hertis greuaunce;
 Oppressid with pouert, & kan no purueiaunce,
 Sauff to resorte to thi magnificence,
 Onli be support to fynde me my dispence!

O well of
 generosity,
 incline thine
 ears to hear
 my suppli-
 cation;
 3868 oppressed with
 poverty,
 through thy
 magnificence
 only can I find
 my means of
 support.

[How Malleus Duk of Cartage for oppressioun
 tyrannye was hewen in to pecys.] ¹

WHAN Bochas hadde rehersed of poetis,
 Ther straunge studie & ther soleyⁿ writyngis,
 And ther desirs of solitarie seetis,
 In plesaunt placis to make ther duellyngis,
 Beside ryuers & holsum welle spryngis,
 Which acomplissed, he gan his penne auauance,
 Pryncis off Affrik to putte in remembraunce.

3872 After John
 Bochas (and
 John Lydgate)
 had told of
 poets and their
 desire to live
 alone in pleas-
 ant sur-
 roundings, he
 3876 began to write
 about princes of
 Africa,

And whil he dede his besi dilligence
 Ther pitous fallis to putte in memorie,
 First ther cam tweyne vnto his presence,
 Ther old noblesse appallid & ther glorie,
 Which, as hym sempte, withyne a teritorie
 O[f] Affrik boundis, longyng to Cartage,
 Dide first appeere, most dedli of visage.

3880 two of whom,
 Machæus, duke
 of Carthage,
 and Cartalus,
 his son,
 appeared in his
 presence.

The ton of hem was named Malleus,
 Duk of Cartage, of Affrik lord and sire.
 His sone also calld Cartalus,
 Whilom cheef prince & bisshop eek of Tire.
 But Malleus, which heeld the gret empire
 Of al Affrik, for his pompous outrage
 Exilled was for euere out of Cartage.

3888 Machæus was
 exiled for his
 outrageous con-
 duct and sought
 revenge.

Which caused hym in herte he was nat murye, [p. 192]
 But ay remembrid upon his fel banshyng,
 Gadred his peep^{le} withynne the lond of Surrye,
 And in the feeld, whil he lay hosteieng,
 Cast hym fulli to make no tarieng,
 But in al haste, of knihtli fel corage,
 Maugre his enmyes resorte onto Cartage.

3892 Raising an army
 in Syria, he
 resolved to
 return to
 Carthage in
 spite of his
 3896 enemies.

3879. his] this R.

3882. ther] the H.

3894. upon] on H.

3886. 90. Manlyus H, Macheus P.

3898. al] al þe H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 79 recto.

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He sent for his son, who was prince and bishop of Tyre, to come and help him with all the chivalry of his town; but as it was then the time for sacrifice to Hercules, Cartalus preferred to offend his father rather than neglect the gods.

His father was very angry.

and venomous tongues made matters worse, for no poison is more baneful than the hateful violence of slander.

The festival over, the bishop went at once to his father. He did not even stop to change his clothes.

Tauenge his exil his herte was set affire,
And his entent[e] mor to fortefie,
He sente in haste his lettres down to Tire,
To Cartalus, that he sholde hym hie,
And brynge with hym al the cheualrie
Of his cite, in steel armyd cleene,
His fadres parti to holde up and susteene.

But whan this bisshop knew hooli the maneer
Of this purpos, which ye han herd deuise,
He considred how that tyme of the yeer
Ordeyned was to do sacrefise,
Aftir the rihtis of ther paynym wise,
To Hercules, which in that cite
About al goddis hadde the souereynte.

Whos feeste was holde space of certeyn daies,
Which for to halwe he needis must entende,
And bi the custum make no dellaies,
But that he muste therto condescende.
And leuer he hadde his fader to offende,
As in swich caas, than thoruh neccligence
Vnto his goddis for to doon offence.

Wherof his fader hadde indignacioun,
The caas arettyng to vnkyndenesse,
And therof kauhte a gret occasioun
Ageyn his sone, of froward wilfulness:
For princis ofte, of furious hastynesse,
Wil cachche a qu[a]rel, causeles in sentence,
Ageyn folk absent, thouth ther be non offence.

And summe tungen venymous of nature,
Whan thei parceyue that a prince is mevid,
Tagregge his* ire do ther besi cure,
With fals langage to maken hym mor grevid.
But ther is no poisoun so weel expert nor previd
As is of tungen the hatful violence,
Namli whan princis list* yiue hem audience.

The feeste acomplished of myhti Hercules,
Al innocent of double or fals meenyng,
The said[e] bisshop, of wil nat rek[e]les,

3903. Tartalus J. 3908. Of] & H. 3911. wise] guyse H.
3914. was] wast R. 3917. therto] for to H.
3925. of] in H. 3930. his] ther B. 3934. list] wil B.
3936. Al] An R.

3900

3904

3908

3912

3916

3920

3924

3928

3932

3936

Kam to his fader withoute mor tarieng,
 Chaungid nouthur habit nor clothyng,
 With al thensignes, & in the same wise
 As he toforn hadde doon his sacrefise.

3940

Anon his fader made no delay,
 Withoute excus, it wolde be no bet,
 Of hasti rancour, the silue same day
 Maad hym been hangid upon an hih gibet.
 Lawe an[d] iustise wer bothe aside set,
 And tiranye, most furious & wood,
 To do vengauce in trouthis place stood.

3944

But on the
 same day his
 fader had him
 hanged on a
 gibbet.

3948

Who can or may tirauntes wil descryue,
 Whos marcial suerdis be whet ay for vengauce?
 Ther bloodi thrustis doth thoruh ther hertes ryue,
 Ther eris ay open to heere of sum myschaunce, 3952
 Ther furious merthe, ther mortal wood plesaunce,
 Ther pale smylyng, ther lauhtr of fals hatreede,
 Concludeth euere upon sum cruel deede.

Who can
 describe the
 will of tyrants,
 — their furious
 mirth, their pale
 smiling and
 laughter of false
 hatred!

Thei been mynistris to Parchas sustren thre,
 Tuntwyne the threedis of folkis heer mortall,
 And verray cosyns, thoruh hasti cruelte,
 Vnto the woode Furies infernall,
 Children to Pluto, of vengauce marciall,
 Which for ther vices, but thei bere hem weel,
 Shal tourne in helle on Ixiones wheel.

3956

Ministers of the
 Parce, cousins
 of the Furies,
 children of
 Pluto, they will
 turn in hell on
 Ixion's wheel
 for their vices.

3960

Thus Malleus, fader most vnkynde,
 Lik swich a tirant, shad out his cruelte,
 As ye han herd; and aftir, as I fynde,
 Of furious herte and of old enmyte,
 Be force is entrid Cartage the cite,
 And slouh al tho in his hatful ire,
 That hym afforn had exiled into Tire.

3964

Thus
 Machæus first
 slew his son,
 and then
 entering Car-
 thage murdered
 all those who
 had caused his
 exile.

3968

Wrouhte aftir wil and nothyng aftir riht,
 Gan robbe and spoille that noble famous toun,
 Which made hym hatid in the peeplis siht
 For his outrage and gret extorsioun,
 Hauyng no ioie nor consolacioun

3972

He robbed and
 spoiled until
 he was hated
 by the people,
 whom it was his
 joy to oppress.

3941. his] om. R. 3949. wil] weel R.

3951. thrustis] thyrst P, trustys H 5, thristis R 3.

3960. Childre R, H. 3963. Manleus H, Macheus P.

3966. 2nd of] om. R. 3967. of Cartage R.

3969. afforn] om. H. 3972. peeple R. 3973. For] for by

- Withynne his herte, pleykli, nor gladnesse,
Sauf lik a tiraunt the peple to oppresse. 3976
- They bewailed
their misfor-
tune; and
Bochas says, that
the lordship of
princes who
climb up fast
to riches
through pillage
will not last
long. The peple of Cartage sore gan to pleyne [p. 193]
Vpon ther mischeeff and desolacioun.
And Bochas writ, rehersyng in certeyne,
Wil is a stepmooder of witt & of resoun; 3980
And wher that princis ha[ue] domynacioun,
And bi fals pillage to richesse clymbe up faste, —
Trusteth riht weel, ther lordshipe may nat laste.
- Their wealth and
worldly dignity
are of no help
to them if they
are tyrants; for
lordship is the
love of a well-
ordered people. Ther grete poweer of worldli excellence, 3984
Nor ther acrochyng of temporal richesse,
Whan thei be tirauntes, may stonde in no diffence,
And froward wil[le] reuleth ther hihnesse.
For what is lordshipe, pleykli to expresse, 3988
In this world* heer, yif it be discernid? —
Loue of the peple whan thei be weel gouernid.
- Tyranny and
oppression
engender hatred;
and when the
people cease to
fear him, a
prince is but
a man alone. For tirannye and fals oppressioun
Causeth princis to stonde in gret hatreede. 3992
And what is worth ther domynacioun,
Withoute loue lat preue it at a neede?
Men for a tyme may suffre hem weel & dreede;
But whan that dreed constreyned is & goone, 3996
Than is a prince but a man allone.
- Machæus is
a good example;
for finally the
people rose and
tore him in
pieces. Seeth an example how Malleus of Cartage,
For al his castellis & tour[els] maad of stonis,
For his oppressioun, vengauce and outrage, 4000
The peple of Affrik ros on hym al attonys,
And hew assonder his flessch & eek his bonys,
Caste hem pleykli, on hym thei wer so wood,
Vnto ther goddis to offren up his blood. 4004
- His subjects
thought that
no offering was
more acceptable
to their gods
than the blood
of tyrants. The peple dempte, of mortal cruelte,*
Ther was non offryng so plesaunt nor couenable
Vnto ther goddis to plesse ther deite, 4008
As blood of tirantes, which that be vengable.
Thus cruel princis make the peple vnstable
Of necessite, which ouhte be compleyned,
To wreke ther wrongis that thei be constreyned.

3977. pleyne] compleyn R. 3983. riht] om. H.

3984. Ther] The H. 3985. Nor] To R. 3989. world]
word B.3994. it] om. H. 3997. a man but R. 3998. Manlyus H.
4005. cruelte] equite B.

Loo, heer the eende of Malleus the tiraunt,
Which doth to princis ful weel exemplefie,
To God aboue how it is nat plesaunt
Them to delite in no swich robberie,
Nor pile the peeple be no fals tyrannye,
Nor for no talis be hasti of vengauce;
For al swich thyng to God is displesaunce.

4012 The fate of
Macheus
shews that God
is not pleased
with kings
who rob and
oppress their
people.

4016

¶ Lenvoye.

RAD and considred, this saide tragedie
Sheweth to princis a merour ful notable,
How thei ther rigour shal tempere & modese
Or thei proceede for to be vengable:
For in a prince it is riht comendable,
Rancour of herte, of cheer & of corage
For to differre til that ther ire aswage.

4020 This tragedy
teaches that
princes should
temper their
rigour.

4024

Ther hasti* ire, [ther] sodeyn malencolie,
The[r] colerik fumys, ther furie vnrestreynable,
Ther vnqueynt fires with flawme of tyrannye,
Ther fretyng etik of hate incomparable,
Lik bestial tiges, lik leouns vntretable,
Ne wil nat suffre ther infernal rage
Differre ther doomys til ther ire asswage.

4028 In their hasty
anger and un-
restrained fury
and hate they
are like tigers.

4032

The roial leoun, of mortal gent[e]rie,
Among beestis of force incomparable,
Preueth nat his poweer nor his regalie
Geyn beestis prostrat, which be nat defensable.
And myhti princis sholde, in caas semblable,
For innocentes take merci in morgage,
Respytyng rigour til ther ire asswage.

4036 The lion does
not prove his
might on de-
fenceless
creatures.
Princes should
follow his
example.

Ther sparle of vengauce is quiked in partie
Be wyndis foure, fell and abhominable:
Blast of detraccioun, & blast of flaterie,
Blast of fals rowneris, that forge many a fable,
And blast of bribours, most vicious & coupable,

4040 Detraction,
flattery, deceit,
and extortion
fan the flame
of their rage.

4012. Manlyus H. 4016. fals] om. H.

4026. hasti and sodeyn are transposed B — 1st Ther] The H.

4027. 1st Ther] The H, R 3 — 2nd ther] the J, pe H.

4029. etik] fretyk R. 4030. intretable R.

4031. ther] that R.

4034. beestis] al beestis H. 4038. Innocence H.

4044. blast] bast R — coultable R, H.

With smoki sclaudris & felenous fals visage,
Causeth ire of pryncis that it may neuer aswage.

Let princes
beware of lying,
slandrous
tongues.

For which lat princis, of noble policie
Bewar of tungis double and deceyuable, 4048
Which with ther venym infect ech compayne,
Ther poynaunt poisoun is so penetrable;
To folk absent it is myscheuable,
So deepe fretith ther serpentyn langage, 4052
Causyng in princis ther ire may neuer asswage.

Let virtue,
noble Princes,
magnify your
high estates
and make you
merciful.

Noble Pryncis, lat vertu magnefie
Your hih estatys to make you merciable;
For moral Senec doth clerli specefie, 4056
The throne of princis be clemence is maad stable.
Vengauce delaied, to God is agreable;
And hasty rigour doth outragous damage,
Whan humble requestis your ire may nat aswage. 4060

[How the substaunce of the host of himilcho duke
of Cartage goyng to conquere Cicile died of
pestilens & aftir himsilf slayn.]¹

Himilco, duke
of Carthage, was
sent to conquer
Sicily.

AFFTIR these noble myhti princis tweyne, [p.194]
Next in ordre, with pale & ded visage,
Toforn Iohn Bochas Himilcho gan compleyne
Thunhappi fall of his fatal passage, 4064
Whan he was sent bauctorite of Cartage
To conquere, thoruh his myhti puissaunce,
The lond of Cecile vnto ther obeissance.

The Carthagin-
ians believed
that such high-
handed pro-
ceedings were
lawful;

Thei of Cartage hadde an oppynyoun, 4068
That it was leeful, aftir ther entente,
Withoute title of riht or of resoun,
Ther teritories & boundis to aumeute.
And for that cause Hymylco thei* sent, 4072
The mihti duk, ther noblesse to auauunce,
Which off Cartage hadde hool the gouernaunce.

so their duke set
out over the sea
with a great
army.

And for he muste passen bi the se
Toward Cecile, this noble worthi kniht, 4076
With hym he lad[d]e a ful gret enarme

4045. felenous] felons J. 4053. ther] þat H.
4063. hymiliche R, Amilco P. 4071. taugment R.
4072. cause] cas H — thei] forth was B.
4076. this] the R — worthy noble H.

¹MS. J. leaf 79 verso.

Chose out of Cartage, in steel armyd briht,
 Ther foon to conquere of verray force & myht.
 But Fortune gan at hym so disdeyne,
 That to his purpos he neuer myht atteyne. 4080

Ground & gynnyng of his destruccioun,
 To be remembrid shortli in sentence, —
 Ther fil of thair a gret corrupcioun, 4084
 Which that caused a ful gret pestilence
 Among his meyne, be vnwar violence,
 And sodeyn myscheef that is upon hym fall, —
 He loste almost his worthi knihtis all. 4088

Nih al his peepel was slayn in that moreyn,
 That with a fewe beleft of his meyne,
 Infortunat he turnede is ageyn
 Hom to Cartage; and thei of the cite, 4092
 Al causeles, of hasti cruelte,
 Hath slayn ther duk, as Bochas doth compile.
 Loo, who may truste Fortune any while!

But Fortune
 so corrupted the
 air that almost
 all his soldiers
 died from
 pestilence,

and, returning
 home to
 Carthage,
 Himilco was
 slain by his
 subjects.

[How heynon duc of Cartage was dismembrid.]¹

A FFTIR whos deth anon *per* gan succede 4096
 A mihti duk *bat* callid was Haynoun,
 Which purposed for to chaunge *in* deede
 His name of duk, bi fals ambicioun,
 And to be callid thoruhout the myhti toun, 4100
 Kyng of Cartage; and therupon of pride
 To fynde out weies he felli gan prouyde.

Hanno, duke of
 Carthage,
 wished to be
 king,

He was nat content a duk men sholde hym calle,
 But of Cartage for to be namyd kyng, 4104
 And lik his purpos that it sholde falle,
 Fro day to day the menys compassyng,
 How he myht fulfille this vnkout[h] thyng,
 For to be crownid an[d] regnen in that lond. 4108
 And atte laste this mene weie he fond:

and day
 by day sought
 means to fulfil
 his ambition.

4085. that] *om.* R.

4091. turnede] *turny* H.

4094. ther] *this* R.

4097. Hannon P.

4100. the] *that* R.

4108. crownid] *crowned* kyng R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 80 recto

He had a
young daughter
whom he in-
tended to give
in marriage to
the son of a
senator,

He hadde a douhtir yonge & tendir of age,
Which of the peeple stood in gret fauour;
And he hym caste to yiuē hir in mariage
To a yong kniht,* sone of a senatour,
Which in the cite was a gret gouernour.
And that his purpos myhte been atteyned,
Day of the mariage & tyme was ordeyned.

4112

4116

and arranged for
the occasion a
royal banquet,

And in his paleis, cheeff and princepal,
This saide duk leet make his ordenaunce
To holde a feeste ful solempne & roial,
And with gret costis made his purueiaunce
Of sondry deyntes, which that in substaunce
Wer necessarie in alle maner thyng
Vnto the feeste of a worthi kyng.

4120

to which he
invited all the
senators,

He gaf in charge vnto his purueiours,
That al wer redi ageyn a certeyn day;
And to his feeste cam al the senatours
Duellyng in Cartage; ther durste no man* sey nay.
And of his purpos to make no delay,
Thouh his fraude was nat apparceyued,
He caste that day summe sholde be deceyued.

4124

4128

meaning to
poison them;
for he knew
that they
would never
consent to make
him king.

He conceyued in his inward entent,
He to be kyng and regnen in Cartage;
The senatour[e]s wolde neuer assente
To chaunge ther custum nor ther old vsage.
He durste theroff vttre no langage,
Kepte hym secre withoute noise or soun,
And fulli caste hym to proceede bi tresoun.

4132

4136

The nexte weie, he knew no bettir reed
To his desir, than pleyntli to ordeyne
That of Cartage the senatours wer ded;
Than wer he likli his purpos to atteyne
For to be crownid lord and souereyne,
So tacomplysshe his luste in alle thyng,
And in Cartage to regne as lord & kyng.

4140

4144

4113. kniht] a kniht B. 4114. gret] om. R.

4119. holde] helde R.

4121. Of] & H. 4124. in] a R.

4126. feeste] festis H.

4127. no man] non B, R, J, H 5, R 3.

4130. that day that R.

4133. neuer nat H.

4139. ban to his desire pleyntly H.

4142. For] om. H.

For yif the senat wer uttirli destroied,
 He sholde fynde no maner resistance,
 Werbi his purpos sholde been encloied,
 Nor dur sei nay to his magnificence;
 For in the poraille ther was no diffence.*
 And at this feeste he caste hym to proceede
 Al his entent[e] to conclud in deede.

His officeris he made to be sworn
 To helpe destroie falsli be poisoun
 The senatours, of whom I spak toforn,
 And that ther vitaille & deyntes in foisoun,
 And eek ther wynes, for short conclusioun,
 Sholde with venym been intoxicat,
 Thoruh al the paleis, & spare non estat.

These officeres hadde a conscience
 For tacomplisshe so horrible a thyng;
 And secreli vnder gret providence
 To the senat thei gaff therof warnyng.
 And whan thei knew this mortal compassyng
 Off duk Haynoun, teschewen al affray,
 Thei putte the weddyng of prudence in delay.

Wherof this duk gan haue suspeciou, n
 And of this mateer fill in a maner dreede;
 Thouhte he wolde bi sum collusioun
 Ageyn Cartage mor mortalli proceede,
 And gan calle to helpe hym in his neede
 Of Mauritayne a kyng of gret renoun,
 With hym bi force to falle upon the toun.

Made hym promys, to his auauntage,*
 For to make free destrubucioun
 Of [the] richessis, tresour and pillage,*
 Which that he myht fynde* in the toun.
 For vttir fyn of his entencioun
 Was to destroie, of wilful[ll] cruelte,
 The famous Cartage, the myhti strong cite.

[p. 195] Once they were
 destroyed, there
 would be no
 one left in
 authority to
 oppose his
 wishes.

4148

4152 He informed
 his servants of
 his intention
 and instructed
 them to put
 poison in the
 food and wine;

4156

4160 but their con-
 science forbade
 them to do
 such a horrible
 thing, and they
 warned the
 senators,

4164

4168 who caused the
 wedding to be
 delayed.
 Hanno became
 suspicious and
 allied himself
 with the king of
 Mauretania,

4172

promising him
 a share of the
 pillage of the
 town,

4176

4148. dare H.

4149. diffence] difference B.

4150. this] the R.

4155. that] om. H — in foisoun] infuson R, bi foisoun H.

4161. secretly H.

4173. auauntages B, R, H, H 5.

4175. richesse H — pillage] pillages B, J, P, H 5, H, R, R 3.

4176. myht fynde] fyndep B.

and strengthen-
ing his forces
with the rissraff
of Carthage, re-
tired to his
castle.

Of al the thrallis in the toun duellyng, 4180
And swich as wer[e] born of lough lynage,
To strengthe his parti, this was his werkynge:
He made hem alle, bi mortal fals outrage,
Withynne the myhti castell of Cartage 4184
To keepe hem cloos, of malis & envie
Ageyn the cite hymself to fortefie.

But it was all in
vain: the
senate held the
king of Maure-
tania in check,
and, overcoming
Hanno and his
churls,

But al for nouht: the myhti senatours
Therof wer ware,* and of hih prudence 4188
Ageyn* his malis and al his fals robbours
Thei made hem strong, and thoruh ther prouidence,
In especial tordeyne a diffence,
First on ther parti to lette the komynge 4192
Of Mauritayne the stronge cruel kyng.

And of assent thei list[e] nat dellaye,
But roos attonys, and bi gret ordenaunce
Ther false duk to venquisshe and outraie, 4196
Hym and his cherlis thei brouhte to vttraunce,
Fill upon hym with a gret puissaunce,
And fynalli, procedyng off resoun,
This was his doom, bauys of al the toun: 4200

stripped him of
his garments and
hewed him in
pieces.

First, of this duk as it is remembrid,
He was dispoilled, his doublet eek vnlacid,
Ioynt fro ioynt hewen and dismembrid,
And from his hed his eyen out arraced. 4204
And riht as he hadde afforn compassid
To haue destroyed his owne myhti toun,
As ye han herd, [he] resceyued his guerdoun.

¶ Lenvoye.

Thus these two
rich and mighty
princes of
Carthage were
elain. The one
without cause,

THIS tragedie doth pitousli compleyne, 4208
And maketh a maner lamentacioun
Of thes riche myhti princis tweyne,
Slayn in Cartage, as maad is mencion.
Causeles the ton,* sauf bi thoccasioun, 4212
That pestilence in his froward viage
Slouh al his peeples, that wer born in Cartage.

4188. wer ware] war B, R, J.

4189. Ageyns B, Geyn J. 4197. chorlis R, Chorlis H.

4205. afforn as he had H. 4210. myhti riche R.

4212. ton] toun B, J, town (om. the) R.

Fortune also gan frowardli disdeyne
 Ageyn this riche mihti duk Haynoun,
 Whan he of malis gan mortalli ordeyne
 The senatours to moordren of his toun,
 At his feeste bi crafft of fals poisoun,
 As ye han herd rehersid his outrage.
 He was ageynward dismembrid in Cartage.

4216 the other for
 his malice and
 deceit.

Who doth vengauce, vengauce shal atteyne,
 In ech estaat, withoute excepcioun,
 And who of pite vengauce doth restreyne,
 He shal of merci resceyue the guerdoun:
 For riht requereth, of trouthe & of resoun,
 Cruel princis shal haue for ther wage
 Deth, lik this duk, dismembrid in Cartage.

4224 He who does
 vengeance shall
 reap vengeance,
 and he who
 restrains his
 hand for mercy
 shall receive
 mercy's reward.

Noble Princis, doth your besi peyne [p. 196]
 For to preserue fro rebelloun
 The comoun peepel, which stant in noun certeyne,
 With eueri wynd turnyng up-so-doun.
 Afftir Fortune thei chaunge affeccoun,
 Turnyng ther hertis with trist or glad visage,
 Lik as the peepel dide whilom in Cartage.

4228 Noble Princes,
 do your best
 to keep the
 fickle common
 people from
 rebellion.

¶ Thautour a-geyn couetous Peple.¹

NATURE pat is content with litil thyng,
 The wise, war, be circumspect goddesse,
 Which vnder God in heuen aboue regnyng,
 This world to gouerne is callid themperesse,
 Mooder of richessis, the first founderesse,
 Which cerchid out bi hir artificeres
 The straunge tresours hid in the myneres.

4236 The wise
 Goddess of
 Nature, empress
 of the world
 and mother of
 wealth, first laid
 up treasures in
 mines.

This noble ladi, this princesse most famous,
 Knowyng of man thunkouth condiciouns,
 Sauh bexperience richessis wer noious, —
 In hym teclipse the disposiciouns,
 And conveie his inclynaciouns
 Bi a wrong weie vertu to sette aside,
 How couetise was a ful pereilous guide.

4244 She knew the
 evils of
 covetousness

4221. He] And H.

4234. or] & R.

4238. above in hevene H. 4239. This] The R.

4247. conveie] conveyne R. 4249. perlious R.

¹ The same heading in J, 80 verso.

and avarice,
by which men
are incited to
delve in the
earth for treas-
ure.

For auarise, to al vertu contraire,
The gredi worm, the serpent vnstaunchable,
Man to be-traisshe with promyses debonaire, 4252
At prime face soote and agreable,
Tauht hym of nature bi craft most deceyuable,
Thoruh sotil serchyng, as it wer for the nonys,
First out of erthe to delue precious stonis. 4256

Rich metals are
sought for and
ships with their
broad sails con-
trived out of
desire for gain.

Of riche myneris thei serche the entrailles,
To fynde out metallis for worldli auauntages,
Contryued shippis with ther brode sailles 4260
Bi dyuers sees to make ther passages.
And couetise ordeyned first viages,
Caused princis ride in londis ferre,
Ech ageyn other for to gynne a werre.

Wars are
begun for
avarice; robbery,
murder, and
extortion

Off auarice gan first thes robberies, 4264
Await of brigauntis and al extort pillages,
Moordre, slauhtre & couert briberies,
Of old contreuid, furious fel damages,
Wrouht and acheuid in al maner ages. 4268
Now in thes daies, lat set it at a preeff,
Fals couetise caused al swich myscheeff.

spring from
covetousness,

She was first roote of fals extorsioun,
To spoile the peeple, mooder of rauyne, 4272
And sterere up* of oppressioun:
To take bi force, this was hir doctrine.
And as myn auctour doth pleynli determyne
And concludeth in ful pitous wise, 4276
Roote of al euil is fals couetise.

the nurse
of strife,
mistress of
wilful violence,
rebellion and
the subversion
of realms.

She was eek norice of contek & of striff,
Maistresse of moordre and wilful violence, 4280
Maad men to iupartie boodi, good & lyff,
Caused discencioun and disobedience,
Gruchchyng of comouns, withdrauht of reuerence,
Bi rigerous constreynt sodeyn rebellious,
Rumour in rewmys, unwar subuersiouns. 4284

4250. to] is to.

4252. promyses] promysse R.

4257. myneris] mines P — serche] serche out H, R, J.

4264. thes] the R. 4265. pillagies R.

4273. up] first B, H 5, R 3, H. (The reading in R, R 2, and Sloane is up).

4278. was] is R, J.

This froward dragoun ful of idropesie,
Whos fretyng etik ther may no plente feede,
To staunche his thrust ther is no remedie:
The mor he drynketh, the mor he hath ay neede;
And the mor tresour, the mor he stant in dreede,
With Tantalus thouth he swymme in the floodis,
In Migdas well pleyne[n]th for lak of goodis.

There is no
remedy for its
thirst, though it
swim in the
floods with
Tantalus or live
in Midas' well.

This werm eek causeth that men in ther richesse
Haue dreed of theuys a-nyht in ther wakyng;
And yif thei heere on coffre, bed or presse,
Cat, rat or mous, or any werm meuyng,
He weneth anon, withynne hymself deemyng,
That ther wer kome, with gret apparaille,
Sum vnkouth pilour his tresour to assaille.

4292 it causes men
to fear thieves
and to start at
the noise of
small creatures
at night, and
to stand ever
in despair and
dread lest their
possessions fail
them,—most
greedy when
they most
abound in
wealth!

The woful soule stondeth euere in dreede,
And ay abideth in labour & trauaille,
And of the goodis, which he doth posseede,
Fallith* in dispeir list thei wolde hym faille.
Tween hope and dreed ther is swich a bataille,
Thoruh entermynyng* ech other to confounde,
To be most gredi whan thei most habounde.

4300

Hope vnassurid with dreed[e] dispeired [p. 197]
Meetyng in hertes make a ful mortal werre.
Whan hope presumeth, with dreed he is appeired,
And lik a coward makith hym stonde aferre,
Dul of his cheer as is a cloudi sterre,
Which dar nat shewe the liht of his tresour,
But euer tencrecè set hooli his labour.

4304 Hope and
Dread meeting
in hearts make
mortal war, and
Hope becomes
a coward,

He thar nat touche thyng that he loueth most,*
His cofres cloos be shet so vndir keye,
Thouth he hath mekil, he makth therof no bost,
Lest for his tresour men wolde hym werreie, —
Pleyne[n]th for neede, lik as he wolde deie,

4312

not daring to
touch the
wealth he loves
above all other
things, and
complaining of
poverty lest he
be robbed.

4285. dropesye R, hidropsie P.

4287. his thrust] his thrust this thrust R.

4291. Migdas] Midas P — well] wellis H, welth P.

4293. wakyng] walkyng R.

4302. Fallith] Falle B.

4303. a] om. R, P.

4304. entermynyng] vndirmynyng B, (entermynyng J, entymenyng H 5, entremynyng R, entirmynyng H, R 3, interminyng P).

4306. dispeired R.

4307. Meetyng] meevyng H.

4313. thar] dar R, H —most] best B. 4315. have H.

- Feyneth fals pouert to sparen his dispençe,
Oppressyng plente with froward indigence.
- Though his chests are heaped with gold, scarcity rules his household.
And thouh his chestis happid be with gold, 4320
With iren barris faste shet & closid,
Fals scarsete gouerneth his houshold,
That be non excesse he is nat vndisposid,
His indigent herte so streihtli is enosid 4324
To Herebus heir; and yit weel wers in deede,
In grettest richesse to compleyne vpon neede.
- His heart is bound to Erebus, in whose iron city turns Ixion's wheel, under the guard of Tisiphone; where Sisyphus labours ever with his stone.
This Herebus hath of iren, nat of ston,
For auarice bilt a foul cite, 4328
Wher-as the wheel tourneth off Ixion
Vndir the boundis of Thesiphone,
Wher Zeziphus may neuer a day go fre,
But with his ston contynuelli trauaileth, 4332
And the mor besi, his labour lest auaileth.
- Thus auarice, to ve[r]tu most contrarie,
Founde among vices ful contagious,
Euer bisi the restles ston to karie, 4336
Now up, now down, with weri Zeziphus,
Whos endles labour braideth on Theseus,
Which heeld the bridel of frutles bisynesse,
Condemned in helle to lyue in idilnesse. 4340
- Charon is the cruel boatman of covetousness, who sails the flood of Acheron.
Off couetise the cruel maryner
Is callid C[h]aron, whiche with Flegonte,
Bi many a streiht & many fel daungeer
Sailleth in the floodis of furious Acheronte, 4344
Vnder that dirked and cloudi orizonte,
Wher auarice ches whilom nigardshipe
For tresoureer his cofres for to keepe.
- The labour of covetous men in gathering wealth, their fear for its safety, and their sorrow when they must leave it forever, are the three heads of Cerberus.
First to declare the labour in gadryng 4348
Of coueitous men, as it is in deede,
And counzirpeise how ther streiht keepyng
Is euer meynt with importable dreede,
Sorwe at departyng, for ther mortal meede, 4352
Which may be callid, of trouthe & equite,
Of Cerberus the wakir hedis thre.

4320. happid] hepid H, happed R, J, heped P.
4324. enosid R, enoisid H. 4325. Erebus P.
4330. theophone R. 4331. Sisiphus P.
4334. Thus] This H. 4337. up] vp and R.
4342. Phlegonte P. 4343. fel] a fell H.

The firste hed is vnstaunchable desir
 Off worldli goodis gret richessis to atteyne,
 The mor encres, the hatter is the fyr;
 The seconde hed is the dreedful peyne,
 Which in keepyng, his herte doth constreyne;
 Vnwar departyng, that sodenli doth falle,
 Is the thridde hed, that greueth most of all.

4356

This waker werm, that berth these hedis thre,
 Is callid the werm of gredi couetise,
 Whos bisi constreynt, restles perplexite
 Troubleþ the soule in ful furious wise.
 Which froward monstre, pleynli to deuisse,
 Braideth on Idra, of whom poetis seyn,
 On hed kit of, ther growe thre ageyn.

4360

And the
 serpent that
 bears these
 three heads is
 the monster of
 greedy
 covetousness,
 who troubles
 the soul and is
 like the Hydra.

4368

Euere at the tail of plente and richesse
 Of custum folweth gruchchyng & envie;
 For he that hath of tresour gret richesse
 Is seelde glad, as for his partie.

Behind wealth
 follows envy.
 The rich man
 is seldom glad.

4372

Thus bothe twayne stonde in iupartie:
 The riche with plente halt hym nat appaied,
 And the nedi with pouert is affraied.

And yit in pouert is ful gret sekirnesse,
 Which is a tresour that no man wil assaille.
 And as myn auctour Bochas berth witnessse,
 Amyclates among[es] the poraille
 Leued in pes, seur from al bataille,
 Heeld hym content with swich as God hym sente,
 Whan riche wer armyd & to the werre wente.

4376

And yet, in
 poverty is great
 security.
 Amyclas lived
 in peace among
 the poor, while
 the rich were
 armed and
 went forth to
 war.

4380

Vertuous pouert stant euer in sekir caas,
 To wach his hous [he] hath ful litil neede;
 But proude Pompeie assegid in Duras,
 For feer of Iulius stood in gret[e] dreede.
 But peeplis rude take heerof non heede,—
 Swich as reioysshe hem for to sheede blood,
 In straunge werris wrongli to gete good.

4384

Proud Pompey,
 besieged by
 Caesar, lived
 in great fear;
 but rude folk
 have
 little dread
 of such
 adventures.

4388

Stories olde ful weel reherse kunne
 Diuers studies of folkis heer mortal,
 First how Diogenes was content in his tonne,
 In which he made his loggyng pryncepal,

[p. 198]

Diogenes was
 more content
 in his tun
 than Croesus
 with his over-
 flowing coffers;

4392

4356. richesse R. 4379. Amiclas P.
 4383. sekir] secrete R. 4384. ful] but R 3, P.
 4391. folk R, folke P.

And sauh the cours aboue celestial,
 Lyued gladdere amonges philisophres,
 Than kyng Cresus, with al his stuffed coffres. 4396

and, for all his
 treasure,
 Sardanapalus
 came to an evil
 end. Sophodius,
 who had but
 a garden of
 leeks, was
 always glad and
 without fear of
 robbers.

And yiff men wolde onto mynde call
 The grete myscheuys folwyng on habundance,
 And thynk[e] also how Sardanapall,
 For al his tresour, kam [un]to myschaunce, 4400
 And how Sophodius, porest in substaunce,
 Hadde but a gardyn ful of leekis greene,
 And riht nouht ellis hymseluen to susteene.

This philisophre was euer glad & liht; 4404
 Ther was no wach maad aboute his tour[e]s.
 Ful seurli slept he al the longe niht,
 Hauyng no dreed of theuys ne robbour[e]s.
 In somer walkyng among the fressh[e] flour[e]s, 4408
 And in cold wyntir, ful myrili & ofte
 On drye strauh he lay and slepte softe.

Cincinnatus
 cleared
 ditches for a
 living; content
 with little,
 nature was his
 guide.

Cyncynatus, a poore laboreer,
 Fowede dikes to gete his sustenaunce, 4412
 Withoute gruchchyng, euere glad of cheer
 Bothe in his port & in his contenaunce,
 Demppte he hadde as moche suffisance
 To his plesauce, as Cresus kyng of Lide; 4416
 Content with lilit; Nature was his* guyde.

Assured in his
 poverty, his
 heart was at
 ease. He did
 not care to live
 beyond his
 means.

This poore man, in his pouert assurid,
 With lilit foode, & clothes but a fewe, 4420
 Hadde hertis ese & gladsum pes recarid;
 It liked hym nat ouer his hed to hewe.
 Which thyng conceyued cleerli doth us shewe,
 That ioious pouert conueied with gladnesse,
 Gruchchyng auoided, surmounteth al richesse. 4424

And if people
 considered what
 they endure for
 wealth, they
 would also
 realize how
 transitory is all
 earthly power.

And yif that folk koude considre a-riht
 Ther pitous sihhes, ther thouhtful bisynesses,
 Ther woful labours, ther lilit slep aniht,
 Which thei endure for worldli fals richessis, 4428
 And of thabidyng, the dreedful sekirnessis, —

4399. Sardnapalle R.

4400. unto] to R.

4410. softe] full soffte R, ful softe J, H 5, ful soft P.

4412. Fowede] Made P — his] om. H. 4417. his] hir B.

4424. auoided] avoyed R — surmountyng H.

4426. thouhtful] rouhtfull R.

4428. fals worldly R.

Which thynges peised and callid to memorie:
Al erthli poweer is double & transitorie.

And bi stories, which that be credible,
To preue ther poweer is nat abidyng,
But, at a poynt, slydyng and fallible:
Whilom Masmyssa of Munydie kyng,
That was so mihti, bi record of writyng,
For feer of Siphax, onli his liff to saue,
Fledde into mounteyns & hidde hym in a caue.

4432 No worldly
power is abiding;
Masinissa, king
of Numidia, fled
and hid himself
in a cave
for fear of
Siphax and ate
4436 roots, while
Xerxes drank
blood and
muddy water to
staunch his
thirst.

And ther* he fond[e] but ful smal vitaille,
Constreyned narwe of indigence & neede, 4440
Whan other deyntes, in myscheeff, gan hym faille,
He gadred rootis and eet hem in his dreede;
Eek proude Xerxes kyng of Perse and Mede
Drank blood and water to staunche his gredi
thrust,

Dreed and trauaille gaff hym so gret a lust. 4444

Yit summe men wolde seyn, of auenture
Thei wer compellid ageyn ther volunte,
Thes kynges tweyne, swich myscheeff to endure, 4448
Maugre ther wil[le], of necessite;
For casuel chauns rafft hem ther liberte,
So that the rigour off this* sodeyn rage
Cam in be constreynt, and of no corage.

Although, as
some men may
say, their
poverty was
forced upon
them by chance,

But for al that, folk in ther pouerte
On grete metis that hemseluen feede
Ben also strong, as hool and fair to see,
And also lusti preuid at a neede,
Vpriht of lymes ther iournes for to speede,
As long lyued, the cause to expresse,
Is onli this: thei do non excesse.

4452
nevertheless
poor folk, who
live on coarse
food, are as
strong and
4456 long lived as
one could wish,
for they commit
no excesses.

To* poore men the beste medecyne
Is due labour with moderat abstynence,
Good hair in feeldis whan Phebus list to* shyne,
Voidyng dirke mystis that cause pestilence;
Of heuy stomak thei feele no violence, 4464

4460 Labour is their
best medicine
and the fresh
air of the
fields. They
need no
physicians or
apothecaries.

4430. thyng R.

4435. Masinissa P — Munedy H, Numydye R 3, Numidy P.

4439. ther] thus B.

4446. men] om. H — seyn] fayne R.

4448. myscheeff] om. R. 4451. this] ther B.

4455. as] om. R, J. 4458. the] to R.

4460. To] The B — the] bi R.

4462. list to] doth B — to] om. H.

Thei nat enriche lechis nor poticaries,*
Themsilff to saue with vnkouth letuaries.

The rich are
subject to all
sorts of diseases;
they eat between
meals and live
unhealthy lives.

But folkis riche werkyn the contrarie,
Which in hem causeth malladies stronge; 4468

For ther diet[e] eueri day thei varie
With dyuers metis, and ther sitting longe.
And with al this, ther appetitis wronge,
Take out of tyme, which thei may nat endure, 4472
Which bi custum oppressith ther nature.

Thus Bochas
says that pov-
erty borne with
contentment is
most secure, and
that covetous-
ness with
extorted wealth
is the root of
all evil.

And thus myn auctour, shortli to deuise, [p. 199]
Seith how glad pouert stant most in sekirnesse.

And of al euel, he seith, how couetise 4476

Is roote & ground, with fals extort richesse,
Riot annexid, engendryng gret siknesse,
Theron concludyng, how moderat diete
Set soule and bodi in temporat quite. 4480

[How Enagora kyng of Cipre was bi Artaxerses
outraied/ and put from his kyngdam.] ¹

Evagoras, king
of Cyprus,
came before
Bochas with
eyes blinded by
weeping;

FOLWYNG in ordre the processe of Bochas,

As he remembreth next in his writyng,
To hym appeerede, rehersyng þus þe cas,
Enagora, that was of Cipre kyng, 4484
His eyen derkid be manyfold weepyng,
Because he hadde loste that riche lond,
Which he toforn hadde conquered with his hond.

for he had lost
his rich kingdom,
which abounds
in metals and
lies far to the
south.

This lond of Cipre, as maad is mencionn, 4488
Of dyuers metallis is passyngli habounde,
Hath of richesse gret plente and foisoun;
And of his siht[e], lik as it is founde,
It stant fer south, with many hilles rounde, 4492
And hath also many commodites
Withynne his boundis off toun[e]s & cites.

4465. poticaries] apoticaries B.

4468. hem] hem silf R.

4474. to] om. R. 4475. how that R.

4478. gret] long R.

4480. temporat] moderat R.

4484. Cipre] Egipt H — Euagoras P. 4485. be] with H.

4487. he toforn hadde] to forn he H.

4491. site J, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto.

Touchyng this Cipre I can no mor seie,
 Of which[e] lond Enagora was kyng,
 Til he gan prouddli for to werreie
 With Lacedemonoys, ther parti sustenyng,
 Geyn Artaxerses; & at ther meetyng
 The said Enagora was brouht to outraunce,
 Put from his kyngdam & from al gouernaunce.

4496 I can say no
 more about it;
 but Evagoras
 was conquered
 by Artaxerxes
 and put from
 his realm.

[How Theo kyng of Egypt bi Artaxerses was dryven
 from his kyngdam and fledde in to Arabie.]¹

¶ Next Enagora kam the kyng Theo,
 Of al Egypt long tyme pocessour;
 And to Iohn Bochas he gan* declare his wo,
 How Fortune dide hir froward labour,
 And from hym drouh hir frenshepe and fauour,
 And sodenli thoruh hir iniquite
 She cast this kyng down from his roial see.

4504 Theo, who once
 ruled all Egypt,
 declared to Iohn
 Bochas, that
 Fortuna
 wickedly cast
 him down
 from his throne,
 inciting him to
 make war on
 Artaxerxes

She list hir malis from hym nat differre,
 Ne wolde nat suffre hym to lyue in pes,
 But caused hym to gynne a froward werre
 Ageyn the said myhti Artaxerses,
 Wenying therbi taue had a gret ences, —
 Gadred shippes and made a gret arme
 In his entent tamette hym on the se.

4508

To Lacedemonois he was fauourable,
 Sent hem vessellis stuffid with vitaille,
 Dempte of pride that hymself was able
 With Artaxerses to holden a bataille.
 But hasti trust doth foolis ofte faille,
 For this Theo was aftir anon riht
 Dryue out of Egypt and Iput to fliht.

4512

4516 in aid of the
 Spartans.
 But fools often
 fail in their
 hasty con-
 fidence;

Artaxerses pursuede hym so sore,
 Toform his face he durste nat appeere, —
 Fledde in Tarabie, myn auctour seith no more;
 Ban[y]shed fro Egypt, dedli of face & cheere.
 And of his fate who-so list to lere,
 He was depryued fro kyngli dignite
 And bi Fortune cast from his roial see.

4520

4524 and, beaten, he
 fled into
 Arabia.

4528

4496. Euagoras P.

4502. Euagoras P. 4504. gan] gan to B — wo] om. R.

4508. kyng] thyng R — his] hir H.

4515. tamette] to mete H. 4520. often R.

4525. in to Arabye H, J, into Araby R 3, P — no more] nat
 nomore R. 4528. kyngli] knyhtly H.¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto. No break in text B.

[How Amynta of Macedoyne kyng had by Erudice
his wif, Alisaundre, Perdica, & Philip, that were
slayn.]¹

Amyntas,
king of Mace-
don, grandfather
of Alexander,
had four
children, Alex-
ander,

AND among other, ther fatis compleynnyng,
Theruh Fortunis dreedful violence,
Ther cam Amynta, of Macedoyne kyng, 4532
And to Iohn Bochas shewed his sentence.
And to declare his magnificence,
To Alisaundre graunfader in his liff,
Hauyng foure childre be Erudice his wiff. 4536

Perdiccas and
Philip, by his
wife Eurydice.

The firste of hem was Alisandre Icallid,
And Perdica namyd the seconde,
The thridde Phelipp, in Macedoyne stallid,
Kynge of Grece, lik as it is founde, 4540
Which in richessis gretli dide habounde,
And was eek fader, this noble werreieur,
To Alisaundre the myhti conquerour.

Macedon is
the chief
of the seven
provinces of
Greece

And or myn auctour ferther doth proceede, 4544
He makth in maner a digressioun
From his mateer, lik as ye may reede,
And gynneth in ordre a descripcioun
Of Macedoyne, the famous regioun, 4548
Among Greekis writ in especiall,
Of seuene provynces it is the princepall.

and stretches
from the Aegean
Sea to
Dalmatia.

And so procedyng, he seith how that contre
Strechchith his boundis aboute hym enviryoun 4552
Toward the se which callid is Egeē,
Foorth be Achaia toward septemptryoun.
And to Messie westward it goth doun;
And who that can bi crafte the coostis caste, 4556
To Dalmacia the name therof doth laste.

Mt. Olympus
is in Macedon,
and it is so
high that
neither the wind
blows nor do
rains fall on its
summit.

In Macedoyne, he doth us also lere, [p. 200]
Of Olympus stant the gret mounteyn;
And in that kyngdam is many gret mynere 4560
Of gold and siluer, lik as bookis seyn.
And on that hill is neuer wynd nor reyn;

4532. Amintas P.

4536. Euridice P. 4538. Perdiccas P.

4541. Richesse H, Riches R 3, P. 4544. doth] do H.

4547, 48 are transposed in B, correction indicated.

4554. septentrioun R. 4557. Dalmatia P.

4562. neuer] nouthir R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 82 recto.

For thilke mounteyn so hih[e] doth atteyne,
That it may nouthur blowe ther nor reyne.

4564

The kyng Amynta, of whom I spak toforne,
Hadde in Grece many gret bataille:

Olympiens in Macedoyne born

And Illiriens, togidre he dide assaille.

Thoruh his wisdam he dide alway preuaill;

But with his enmys whil he stood most in striff,

His deth was shapen bi Erudice his wiff.

4568

Amyntas fought many victorious battles against the Olympians and the Illirians; but his destruction was plotted by Eurydice for the sake of a lover she had.

Myn auctour Bochas of hir doth diffyne,

4572

She imagynede his destruccioun,

Because she hadde another concubyne

On whom she sette al hir affecciou.

Day set and tyme to his confusioun,

4576

Fulli ordeyned, at a mariage

He to be slayn bi oon of his lynage.

He hadde a suster callid Vrione,

Which prudentli espied the maneere

Of Erudice, and secreli allone

Goth to the kyng & told hym al ifeere.

And as the story in ordre tellith heere,

Thouh she failled that day of hir emprise,

She thouhte fulfille it in a-nother wise.

4580

Amyntas' sister Vrione, who heard of Eurydice's intention, told Amyntas, and although her plan failed, Eurydice succeeded in stirring up so much enmity and strife that Amyntas' days were shortened.

This to meene, of hir iniquite,

Of hir fraude and fals imagynyng,

She was in cause thoruh hir contrariouste

Of the destruccioun of this* mihti kyng.

For the conclusioun of hir fals werkyng

Was to ha slayn the kyng & al his lyne,

She to haue regnede with hir concubyne.

4588

4592

But whan she sauh she myht[e] nat achieve

Hir furious purpos bi non auenture,

Hir venymous malis upon hir lord to preeve,

On other parties she dide hir besi cure

4596

Enmytes & myscheuys to procure

Ageyn the kyng, bi mortal fel assaies,

With sorwe and trouble for to shorte his daies.

4565. Amyntas P. 4566. gret] strong H.

4579. suster] daughter P — Eurione P.

4580. maneere] mateere H, mateer R 3.

4581. Euridice P — secretly H. 4582. ifeere] in feere R.

4583. is misplaced at foot of column R. 4584. day] om. R.

4587. hir] his H. 4589. this] ther B, R, J, P.

4591. to slayne H. 4593. ascheve R.

For who can
escape
the malice of
subtile women?

Niht and day his lyff stood euere in dreed, 4600
Hym to be-tra[i]sshe she cast out hook & lyne.
And who is he that can or may take heed,
Freli tescape, teschewen or declyne
Malis of wommen, whan thei be serpentyne? 4604
Seeth an exaumpel in this queen Erudice,
Void of al vertu and ful of eueri vice.

No prince, alas,
can learn by
the experience
of others not to
trust himself to
Sirens.

Alas, no prince can be war be other, 4608
To bridle ther noblesse with reynes of resoun,
Swich as commytte, alas, bothe ship & rother
Vnto Syrenes to rowe hem up and doun
Thoruhout Caribdis to ther destruccioun.
Bi craft of Circes, alas, thei wer maad nyce, 4612
Blynd to remembre upon this Erudice!

Amyntas
lived in sorrow
and dread; and
when he grew
old he called
his eldest son
Alexander to
the throne, who
made peace
with Athens

Which made Amynta to lyue in sorwe & dreede,
To reste in pes suffred hym ha[ue] no space.
In thouht and trouble his lyff he gan to leede, 4616
Til be long processe deth hym gan manace;
Yit or he deide Fortune gaff hym grace,
His eldest sone bi wisdam to ordeyne,
Callid Alisandre, his crowne to atteyne. 4620

Thus Alisandre was his successour;
For Thath[e]nienses gan ther rancour lete
Ageyn[e]s hym, for [he] with gret labour
Bi ther suffraunce cam to his roial seete. 4624
And for to sette his rewme in ful quiete,
First with Athenys, the stronge myhti* toun,
Prouided a pes, of hih discrecioun.

and sent his
young son
Philip thither
as a hostage.

And for tauoide al ambiguite 4628
Of old debatis and of old outrage,
First he sente into that strong cite
His sone Phelipp, yong and tendir of age,
On pes assurid to lyn ther for hostage. 4632
And in that cite, the story berth witnesse,
He gan to growe vnto ful hih noblesse.

Philip was
given into the
care of
Epaminondas,
one of the
most excellent
princes of his
time.

He was commytted to the disciplyne 4636
Of a gret duk callid Epamynedoun,
Which to al vertu his youthe made enclyne.
For of this duk Iustyn maketh mencion

4616. he] om. R. 4625. his] this R.
4626. stronge myhti] myhti stronge B, R, J, P.
4627. provide H. 4633. that] be H.
4636. Epaminondon P. 4637. youthe] om. R.

- Bi a maner recomendacioun,
 Tofor nor aftir, as be his auys,
 Was neuer no prince mor excellent nor wis. 4640
- First he comendith his vertuous corage, [p. 201] Justin says that
 His hih noblesse, his knihtli excellence, he was the
 And be discent he born of hih lynage; equal of Mars
 And in too thynges concludeth his sentence, 4644 in chivalry and
 Seith that he was of most magnifisence, a son of Apollo
 Egal to Mars be famous cheualrie, through his
 And sone to Phebus thoruh hih philosophie. high
 4648 philosophy.
- And Bochas heer doth his stile auauce
 Ful notabli with excellent langage,
 And seith no tresour atteyneth in substaunce
 To thilke richesse, auoidyng al outrage,
 As whan ther is be bond of mariage 4652
 Knette up a knotte atween the excellence
 Of famous kniethod and of Dame Prudence.
 This knotte auaieth mor than gold in coffre, 4656 It avails far
 And is mor glorious perpetuelli tabide, more than gold.
- A myhti prince to been a philisophre,
 Which can be prudence alle vices set aside, —
 For whan to manhod prouydence is guide, 4660
 And vertuous force is capteyn in the werre,
 Lat men weel truste, that parti may nat erre!
- This Epamynoda, of kniethod sustenour,
 Charboncle of vertu, as bookis telle konne, 4664
 Of gentil manereȝ callid the famous flour,
 And of hih noblesse a verray worldli sonne,
 Whos knihtli tryumphes be so hih up ronne
 To Martis paleis, with the blissid souns
 Of Famis trompetis and goldene clariouns. 4668
- For he was callid the briht[e] cleer merour
 Of rihtful quarellis the parti [to] susteene,
 Of extort wrongis most iust reformatour, 4672
 Ay egal iuge, of entent most cleene,
 Whiche neuer koude nothyng but trouthe meene,
 Wolde of custum for hate nor alliaunce
 On nouter parti declyne the ballaunce. 4676
4641. nor wis] of price H, of pryce P. 4643. knihtli]
 vertuous R. 4648. hih] his H. 4649. heer] ther R.
 4654. a] the R — the excellence] excellence R.
 4663. Epaminondas P. 4669. Famis] famous R, P.
 4671. to] om. H. 4673. entent] ente R.
- And Bochas
 himself records
 that no treasure
 is so great as a
 bond between
 knighthood and
 Dame
 Prudence.
- Epaminondas,
 flower of gentle
 manners and
 sun of high
 noblesse,
- sustained just
 causes and
 put wrongs to
 right. He was
 an equitable
 judge and a
 victorious
 general who
 laboured always
 for the good of
 the common-
 weal.

And to comende his vertuous prowesse,
 His preuyd tryumphes, his magnanymyte,
 His marcial actis, his knihtli bisynesse
 In the getyng of many a strong cite, — 4680
 And al his labour was for the comounte,
 Which to augmente he wolde neuer cesse,
 Swich ioie he hadde the comoun good tencece.

Whatever
 wealth he
 obtained he
 distributed
 among his
 followers
 and set but
 little store on
 gold, always
 ready to
 assist his
 soldiers and
 leaving no
 treasure behind
 him when he
 died.

This was also his vsaunce ouermor: 4684
 What-euer he gat to parte it in largesse;
 Of gold nor coign he sette but litil stoor,
 For al his herte was sette on gentillesse
 Bi manli fredam, and, pleyntly to expresse, 4688
 He spared no good, it shewed weel in deede,
 His trewe seruautis to helpe hem in her neede.

He kepte nat in coffres his tresour,
 Of his nature he was so liberall 4692
 For to releue ech manli soudeour,
 Swich as wer preued in actis marciall.
 And for to holde his feeste funerall,
 Aftir his deth, his story maketh mynde, 4696
 Thoruh fre departyng ther left no gold behynde.

He extended the
 liberties of the
 Greek cities
 and augmented
 their territories,
 seeking nothing
 for himself, and
 was throughout
 his life a
 student of the
 sciences.

Alle his offises & famous dignites
 And gret emprises in his tyme wrouht,
 Encresid fraunchises thoruh Grece in his cities 4700
 With libertes bi his prudence out souht
 For comoun proffit, and for hymself riht nouht,
 With gret aumentyng of straunge teritories:
 Al this cam in bi mene of his victories. 4704

And among alle his knihtli excellences,
 Bi dyuers auctours vnto mynde is brouht,
 How al his liff he studied in sciences
 And upon konyng set hooli his thouht. 4708
 Bi manli prowesse of deth he rouhte nouht:
 That was shewed, as it is weel founde,
 The day whan he resceyuede his dethis wounde.

4683. comouns H.

4684. ouermor] euermore R, evirmor H, euermore P.

4698. famous] knyhtly H.

4710. is] was H.

He was hom born vnto his pauyllioun,
 Al his armure with blood steyned red,
 And on a couch[e] bi his men leid doun,
 And gan abraide as he lay half ded:
 "Sires," quod he, "of o thyng taketh heed,
 Hath any enmy this day in the feeld,
 Whan I was woundid, taken up my sheeld?"

And whan his knihtis hadde told hym nay,
 Bi a maner of knihtli reioysshying
 He hem comaunded, withoute mor delay
 To his presence that thei sholde it bryng.
 And therupon ful pitousli looking,
 Ful lik a kniht, & with a mortal cheere
 He kissid it, and seide as ye shal heere:

"Thou wer my felawe in armys [and] my
 brother,

That neuer woldest my felaship forsake,
 Seur and abidyng, ther was nat swich a-nother,
 In eueri iourne that I did vndirtake.
 To me wolcome, an eende I mut now make.
 Aftir my deth my soule shal ha[ue] plesaunce,
 The to be kept yet for a remembraunce."

Afforn his deth[e], it is put in mynde,
 The same hour, it cam to his memorie
 To enquere, he lefft nat behynde,
 "Ha[ue] we," quod he, "this day hadde* victorie?
 Or in the feeld who hath the palme of glorie?"
 He praied his knihtis that day he sholde deie,
 The pleyne[e] trouthe that thei wolde hym seie.

And thei hym tolde platli al the cas,
 How his parti hadde wonne the feeld of myht;
 And with that woord he so reioysshed was,
 That he his sperit yolde anon vpriht.
 And so he deide lik a worthi kniht,
 In whom is shewed what vailleth, in sentence,
 Noblesse of knihtthod ioyned with prudence.

4712 Without fear
 of death, on the
 day he received
 his last wound
 and was borne
 with blood-
 stained armour
 to his tent, his
 only question
 was, "Did my
 shield fall into
 the hands of
 the enemy?"

4716 And when his
 knights assured
 him that it had
 not, he com-
 manded it to be
 brought to his
 presence, and
 said,

4724

[p. 202] "Thou wert my
 comrade in
 arms: after my
 death it will
 please my soul
 to know that
 thou art
 kept for a
 remembrance."

4732

His last
 question was,
 "Have we
 had victory this
 day?"

4740

And when told
 that his army
 had won the
 field, he died
 like a worthy
 knight.

4744

4714. leid] lay H.

4730. welcom R, H.

4736. this day hadde] hadde this day B, H 5 — this day quod
 he hadde be victorie H, R 3 (om. be) — hadde] had the R.

4737. who hath] had R.

4738. that] the H, P.

4743. vp anoon riht H, anon vpriht B, H 5, R 3, R, J, anone
 vpright P.

Through
his teaching,
Philip (whose
father was
slain by his
mother) grew in
knighthood and
virtue.

And bi the mene of his wis doctryne,
Phelipp, that lay with hym in hostage, 4748
Gan encrece in knihtli disciplyne,
Wex in vertu riht as he wex in age.

Whos fader was be furious outrage
(Callid Alisandre, as maad is menciouⁿ), 4752
Slayn bi his mooder be couert fals tresoun.

After Alex-
ander's death,
Perdiccas, his
younger brother,
came to the
throne, and he
too was slain.

Aftir whos deth[e], Perdica in deede,
The yonger brother, the story doth deuise, 4756
To the crowne gan lynealli succede;
Anon slayn aftir in ful cruel wise.
Swich fals[e] moordre ech man sholde agrise,
As ye han rad[de], first of Amynta,
Of Alisaundre and of kyng Perdica. 4760

[Ho[w] the proude tirant Aman was honged and
the Innocent preserued.]¹

Haman, a false
tyrant and an
Assyrian by
birth, was chief
governor under
Ahasuerus.

THE horrible fall furious for to reede,
That folweth after of þe gret Aman,
A ful fals tiraunt found in thouht & deede,
And was of berthe an Assyrian,* 4764
Which, as the Bible ful weel reherse kan,
Was cheeff maister, as men may ther* conserne,
With Assuerus his peeples to gouerne.

His heart was
swollen with
pride, and it
was his pur-
pose to destroy
the Jews and
their law.

His herte was exaltid hih in pride, 4768
To goddis peeples most contrarious,
His hatful venym he list nat for to hide,
But lik a tiraunt most malicious,
Of wilful rancour, fell and despitous, 4772
Fulli purposed, and koude hym nat withdrawe,
To destroye the lewes and ther lawe.

Granted
authority, he
sent out letters
commanding all
the people of
Persia to kneel
down to him;

To his entent he gat auctorite
Bi his fals[e] sotil compassyng: 4776
Sent out lettres into ech contre
Thoruhout al Perse be bidding of the kyng,
That hih and low, withynne that lond duellyng, —
No wiht except, — that peeplis al aboute 4780
Sholde vnto Aman obeie, kneele and loute.

4754. Perdicas P.

4764. an Assyrian] a Macedonyan B, H, R, J, R 3, H 5.

4766. as men may ther] who can weel B, R, J.

4768. exaltid was H. 4773. purposed] disposid R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 83 verso.

This was the biddynge of kyng Assuer,
 Whan queen Vasti was uoided for hir pride,
 And Hester chose, a maide most enter,
 Was brouht to court with the kyng tabide,
 Which hadde in youthe for to been hir guyde
 A worthi Iew callid Mardoche,
 Withynne Susis a large fair cite,

and this was
 by the bidding
 of King
 Ahasuerus, at
 4784 the time he
 divorced Vasthi
 and chose
 Esther, who
 in her youth
 had always
 followed
 4788 the counsel of
 Mordecai of
 Shushan.

Bi whos counsail eueri thyng she wrouhte,
 Passyng fair and of gret meeknesse.
 And whan the eunukis to the kyng hir brouhte,
 She was accepted for hir gret fairnesse
 Vnto his grace, hir story berth witesse,
 And ther cherissed in especiall
 Boue al the maidenenes in the court roiall.

4792

And of al Perse she was Icrownid queen,
 A pes comaundid thoruh al tho regiouns
 Duryng the feeste, that men myhte seen
 The kynges nobley in cites and in touns.
 And of this feeste the riche roial souns
 Cam to the eris of symple Mardoche,
 Which cam with othir the maner for to see.

4796 and was now
 crowned
 queen of
 Persia.
 Mordecai heard
 of the wedding
 festivities and
 went with
 4800 others to see
 the sights,

Tofor the paleis as he dide abide
 With othir Iewes in his companye,
 Of happ as he caste his ere aside,
 He of too porteris the counsail dide espie,
 How thei hem caste, bi fals conspiracie,
 To slen the kyng som day of that yeer,
 Lik ther entent whan thei fond best leiseer.

and as he
 stopped before
 4804 the palace he
 became aware
 of two porters,
 who were
 conspiring to
 slay the king.

4808

Whan Mardocheus prudentli gan feele
 The secre malis of ther compassyng,
 Of compassioun he wolde it nat concele,
 But made Hester discure it to the kyng.
 Wherof convict, thei wer lad to hangyng,
 As me semeth, a competent guerdoun
 For al that falsli imagyne swich tresoun.

[p. 203] Out of com-
 passion he
 caused Esther
 to inform
 4812 Ahasuerus;
 and the two
 porters were
 convicted and
 hanged.

4816

4783. uoided] weddid H.
 4787. Iew] Youhe R.
 4791. eunukis] *om.* H, *muddled in R.*
 4795. Boue] above H.
 4796. crownyd H.
 4799. 2nd in] *om.* R.
 4809. best] *om.* H.
 4814. Wherof] Wherforz H.
 4816. swich] such als H.

Thus Mordecai
came into the
favour of the
king and
stood free of
the power of
Haman,

Bi which[e] mene the said[e] Mardoche
Was weel accepted to kyng Assuer,
Likli also to stonde at liberte
Out of the malis and the fell daungeer 4820
Of cursid Aman, which list make hym no cheer,
But compassede in ful fel manere
Hym to destroie & Iewes all ifeere.

to whom he did
no reverence as
the statute
commanded.
In his malice
Haman had a
gibbet erected
for him before
the palace —
as if God were
blind and
unable to see
tyrants;

This Mardocheus, the Bible telle can, 4824
Withdrouh hymself for to do reuerence
Vnto this tirant, the froward prince Aman,
Lik as the statut comaundid in sentence.
Which thyng tauenge be hasty* violence, 4828
This Aman made of hatrede to be set
Affor the paleis a myhti strong gibet.

But who that caste hym for to do vengauce,
And innocentis for toppresse of myht, 4832
Bi wilful malis tagreggen ther greuauce,
As God wer blynde and hadde of hem no siht, —
But at the laste he wil of verray riht
Pun[y]she the proude for furious violence, 4836
The poore supportyng for ther long pacience.

but as Mordecai
had in the
meantime
re-established
the law of the
Jews, Haman
was hanged
high upon a
gallows for his
pains.

As Mardocheus bi innocent lyuyng,
Be mene of Hester and hir gret meeknesse
Accepted was to Assuer the kyng, 4840
The lawe of Iewes set in mor seurnesse,
Froward Aman for his cursidnesse,
Vengable of pride, the Bible ye may see,
Was hih enhangid upon a galwe tre. 4844

Mardocheus, of prudence & resoun,
The furious daunger of Aman set aside,
Preserued his peeple fro destruccioun,
The tiraunt hangid for his froward pride. 4848
Thus kan the Lord his iugementis deuide,
Whan he seeth tyme, most myhti and puissaunt,
Supporte the symple and punshe the tiraunt.

4824. the] this R.

4828. hasty] froward B, J, R.

4838. bi] for H.

4842. his] hir R.

[Off the ii. brethre, Artaxerxes and Cirus/ and
Artaxerxes slouh his childre and concubynes/
and how thei ended.]¹

AFFTIR the fal of Aman, dout[e]lles
4852 After the death
of Haman,
Artaxerxes, in
his time the
most renowned
of conquerors
Whan he beste wende ha regned in his flours,
Tofor Iohn Bochas cam Artaxerxes,
Most renommede his tyme of conquerours,
Which gan declare the* sodeyn sharpe shours, 4856
With al the parcellis of his mortal peyne
Which that Fortune ageyn hym gan ordeyne.

This Artaxerxes, as put is in memorie,
Al othir pryncis excelled in richesse,
4860 and the richest
of princes,
appeared before
Bochas. It was
a strange thing
that he should
fall!
Which in his chaier, famous of worldli glorie,
And with his throne of worldli hih noblesse
Sat in his tyme, the story berth witnesse,
Hiest exaltid that was off eny kyng, — 4864
That he sholde fall, was it an vnkouth thyng!

Kynges he hadde vndir his obeissaunce,
An hundred prouynces, twenti & eek seuene,
Sone onto Darie, prynce of most puissaunce, 4868
His fame drad[de] mor than fryr leuene.
Non so myhti vndir the sterred heuene
Accountid was that tyme, in werre & pes,
As was thys kyng callid Artaxerxes. 4872

He hadde a brother that namyd was Cirus;
Out of o stok cam ther bothe lynes.
But Artaxerxes, the story tellith thus,
Was lord of greynes, of oilles & of vynes, 4876
And hadde also bi dyuers concubynes
An hundred children, lik as it is told,
And fiftene ouer, tofor or he wex old.

Of bothe brethre the poweer laste ferre, 4880
Duryng ther tyme stood in ful hih estat,
Yet atween hem ther was ful mortal werre,
Ageyn nature an vnkyndli debat;
For thilke werris be most infortunat, 4884
Whan blood with blood, lat no man deemen othir,
List [to] werreie, as brother ageyn brother.

4856. the] his B, R, J, P. 4857. the] om. H.

4864. was] evir was H.

4869. fryr] fire R. 4878. childre H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 83 verso.

and its cause
was a quarrel
as to which of
them should
succeed King
Darius.

And fynal cause whi this werre gan
Atween these brethre, as maad is menciouⁿ, 4888
Thoruh which debat ther deied many a man, —
The ground of al and first occasioun
Was onli this: for successioun, —
Aftir kyng Darie, regnyng in Perse & Mede, 4892
Which of them tweyne sholde next succeede.

Artaxerxes put
his brother
secretly in
prison and
fettered him
with gold,

But Artaxerxes bamaner prouydence [p.204]
Put pryueli his brother in prisoun,
That he ne sholde make no diffence 4896
Nor gadre peeple to his destruccioun.
This yonge Cirus, as maad is menciouⁿ,
Was faste stokkid, and eek as it is told,
That his stokkis and fetris wer of gold. 4900

but he escaped
and, collecting
an army, met
Artaxerxes in
battle, and,
after wounding
him, forced him
to retire from
the field.

And thouh it be nat remembred in Bochas,
How that Cirus escaped fro prisoun,
Yit also soone as he delyuered was,
Throuh Perse and Mede ridyng up and doun, 4904
Gadred peeple off entencioun
Thoruh old hatreede his brother to assaile.
The feeld assignede, thei metten in bataile,
Wher Cirus proudli put hymself in pres, 4908
To shewe his manhod in especiall,
Souhte his brother, callid Artaxerxes,
And gaf to hym a wounde ful mortall,
Withoute frenshepe or fauour fraternall, 4912
That Artaxerxes, his wounde gan so ake,
Constreyned was the feeld[e] to forsake.

Cyrus then
began to
slaughter his
foes; but
Fortuna, ever
deceitful, caused
him to be
wounded and
taken prisoner,

And Cirus thanne, furious as leoun,
His aduersaries gan mortalli to wake;* 4916
But fals Fortune, ful of collusioun,
Vnder feynt smylyng a mowe gan hym make,
Which caused, alas, that day that he was take,
Afforn Iwoundid, it wolde be non othir, 4920
And than presentid to his vnkynde brothir.

and shortly
afterwards he
died.

And thouh this Cirus hadde affor be founde
Yong, fressh and lusti, & manli of his hond,
Bi the constreynt of his mortal wounde 4924
He died anon; for he no socour fonde.

4887. fynal] fynalli J — whi] whi þat H — this] these R.
4896. ne] na R. 4915. Cirus] Cirus was J — a leoun J, R 3.
4916. tawake B, H 5. 4919. 2nd that] om. H.

Thanne the two kyngdamys withynne Perse-lond
Fill to the hondis of Artaxerses,
In which aftir he lyued longe in pes.

4928

Thus a gret space, lik a myhti kyng
Al Perse he heeld vnder his obeissaunce,
Be famous noblesse gloriousli shynyng,
Hauyng of richessis most fulsum habundaunce.
And as it is Iput in remembrance,
To mor ences of his prosperite,
In trewe wedlok he hadde sonys thre.

Artaxerxes then
became sole
ruler of Persia.

4932

The firste of hem callid Darius;
Arabratus namyd the secounde;
And the thridde namyd was Othus,
Manli* pryncis, lik as it is founde.
And of nature as the kyng was bounde,
Vnto Darie, as it is maad menciouen,
Aboue echon he hadde affecciouen.

4936

His three sons
were Darius,
Arabratus and
Ochus, but he
loved Darius
above the
others, and
deeming him-
self too feeble
to rule alone,
set up
Darius as king
beside him,

4940

And for he dempte hym able to the werre,
Be likliheed, of yeeris yonge and greene,
He caste fulli his noblesse to preferre;
Of hih prudence thus he dide meene,
His inpotence to supporte and susteene,
For he was feeble in Perse to regne allone,
He sette up Darie with hym in his throne.

4944

4948

Which was a thyng straunge and contrarious,
Ageyn the custum of Persiens and vsance;
But he supposed his sone Darius
Sholde in such caas encrese & avaunce
His fadres parti, of natural attendaunce,
And shewe onto hym trouthe & kyndenesse,
His impotence to cherisshe of gentillesse.

which was
contrary to the
custom of the
Persians.

4952

4956

But in estat is ofte it doth thus fall,
Whan that princis be ronne ferr in age,
Ther childres loue ageyn hem doth appall,
Shewyng no frenshipe sauf for auauntage,
How that thei may reioise ther heritage,
And in swich cas whan thei wexe stronge,
Thynken ther fadris lyuen al to longe.

But as it
often happens,
when princes
grow old, their
children's love
for them dies,
and they begin
to think only
of their inheri-
tance.

4960

4932. fulsum] holsom H. 4936. hem] all H.
4939. Manli] Namli B. 4943. to] for R, vn to H.
4944. liklihoode H. 4947. impotence H.

This was
what happened
to Artaxerxes.
Darius grew
false and unkind

And Artaxerses stood in the same caas,
As in his stori pleynli ye shal fynde
Be rehersaile and writyng of Bochas,
How this Darie was fals & eek vnkynde,
Foryetifful, & hadde nothyng in mynde, 4964
How his fader, the trouthe to reherse, 4968
Hath maad hym egal with hym to regne in Perse.

and rebelled
against his
father.

And to declare the firste occasioun,
To his fader how the said[e] Darie,
Bi a fals maner of rebellioun,
Gan in his werkyng for to be contrarie,
Which to discure I wil no lenger tarie,
But with my penne in al haste proceede 4976
Heer to descryue how it fill in deede.

There was a
fair concubine
named Artusia,
who belonged to
Artaxerxes;

Artaxerses, among his concubynes, [p. 205]
It is remembrid how that he hadde oon
Which, for to rekne wyues and virgynes, 4980
Was fairest holde of them euerichon,
Callid Artasia, of ful yore agon,
And was that tyme, hir beaute to descryue,
Among Persiens the fairest holde a-lyue. 4984

and although
she was well on
in years, having
once been in
Cyrus' harem,
her beauty had
not faded.

And thouh she were Ironne ferr in age,
Lik as bookis list of hire expresse,
Bothe of colour and also of visage
She kept hir beaute & hir natiff fresshnesse. 4988
Which was afor[n]e for hir semlynnesse,
To said[e] Cirus, breeffli to termyne,
Chose long afforn to been his concubyne.

When Cyrus
died she fell
to Artaxerxes,

But whan this Cirus was passid into fate, 4992
Which for his brother myht nat lyue in pes,
Anon upon, withoute lenger date,
She was take up for kyng Artaxerses,
Because she was of beute pereles. 4996
Aftir long tyme, whan he fill in age,
She cleymed was bi title of heritage

and after he
became of age
Darius claimed
her as a part
of his inheri-
tance.

Of kyng Darie bi his fader lyue,
Feynyng his cley[m] bi successioun, 5000
Al-thouh his fadir ageyn it dide stryve.

4966. rehersyng H. 4968. Foryetfull R, Foryetful P.
4972. the] this R. 4982. Artusia P. 4985. ronne R.
4986. bookis] bochas R. 4989. hir] hir saide H.
4990. To] To be H — saide] the forsaid P.
4999. fadres R.

And thus began, as maad is menciouñ,
Of ther debat the firste occasioun;
For Darie caste, al-be he bar it still,
Hir to reioysshe ageyn his fadris will.

5004

And tacomplisshe falsli his entent
Of hir to haue ful pocessioun,
Taforce his parti he made this argument:
"Cirus," quod he, as maad is menciouñ,
Regnyng in Perse the myhti regioun,
And this story doth pleyñli determyne,
"For hir beute made hir his concvbyne."

5008

5012

It was in
this manner
that his quarrel
with his father
began. His
argument was,
that she had
been Cyrus'
concubine, that
when Cyrus
died Artaxerxes
took her, and
that now she
belonged of
right to him,
Darius, by in-
heritance.

And aftir tyme, whan Cirus was ded,
Artaxerses, his fader, ye may see,
Next hym succeedyng in Perse, it is no dreed,
List hir to cleyme eek for hir gret beaute.
"And so," quod Darie, "she longeth now to me,
Because she is so plesaunt to my siht,
Bi successioun I wil hir cleyme of riht."

5016

Thus kyng Darie to his fader saide
He wolde haue Artasia the faire.

5020

Artaxerxes
agreed to give
her to Darius
out of affection;

And therwithal Artaxerses gan abraide,
And ansuerde with face debonaire,
"My sone," quod he, "I wil nat be contraire
To thi desir, but of affeccioun
Delyueren hir to thi pocessioun."

5024

Of his promys he aftir gan repente,
Cast hym to make another cheuisaunce;

5028

but he soon
repented of his
promise and

And secreli his concubyn he sente,
Callid Artasia, as maad is remembraunce,
And thoruh his slehti vnkouþ purueiaunce,
Vnto the temple, swich menys he hath souht,
Of gret Appollo that she in haste was brouht.

5032

Wher she was veilled & maad a preesteresse
Aftir the rihtis, pleyñli, and the guise
Of old paynemes bamaner hoolynesse,
And ther professid for to doon seruise,
As ther statutis constreynen and deuisse.

5036

contrived to
send her to the
temple of
Apollo, where
she was made
a priestess and
vowed to
chastity.

5007. Of hir is repeated R.

5008. this] his H.

5011. playñly doth termyne H.

5015. hym] om. H.

5016. gret] om. H.

5017. now to] vn to H. 5021. Arthusia P.

Duryng hir liff, it myhte non other be,
She bounde was to lyue in chastite.

5040

At this Darius
went almost
mad for rage,

This thyng was wrouhte bi the compassyng
Of Artaxerses, be froward ialousie.

Wherof Darie, the yonge lusti kyng,
Wex almost wood whan he it dide espie,
And gan compassen of malencolie,
Furious rancour & hasty cruelte
Vpon his fader auengid for to be.

5044

and, seeking
revenge, allied
himself with
his 115 natural
brothers, who
agreed that their
father should
die.

And his parti of force to susteene,
With hym he hadde, the story maketh mynde,
His brethre in bast, an hundred & fiteene,
Which to ther fader wer fals & vnkynde.
Of al this noumbre ther lefft non behynde
That fro this purpos onys list dissente,
His deth of o will all did* assente.

5048

5052

But Artaxerxes
was informed of
their intentions
and collected
an army

Yit of this straunge fals conspiracie
Artaxerses hadde a knowlechyng,
Al-though the stori doth nat specefie
How, ne be whom, he hadde therof wetyng.
For which in haste, he made no tarieng
To gadre meyne & make hymself strong,
Hymself tauenge of this disnaturel wrong.

5056

5060

and resolved to
take vengeance
on them.

For Artaxerses, lik as the caas tho stood, [p. 206]
Thouhte it sat weel to his hih noblesse,
To be venged vpon vnkynde blood;
For lawe, nature decres rihtwisnesse,
And alle statutis dampne vnkyndenesse,
Wherbi this kyng occasioun dide fynde
Ageyn his childre, because thei wer vnkynde.

5064

5068

Some men say
that a multitude
of children
make a father
strong, but this
is true only if
they are
virtuous.

Somme men deeme how gret[e] multitude
Of many childre maketh a fader strong;
But therupon, pleynli to concluden,
Vertu is cause, yif she duelle hem among.
But yif ther corage enclyneth onto wrong,
And vicious lyff do ther bridil leede,
The gretter noumbre, the wers thei must[e] speede.

5072

The offspring of
a wicked line
may corrupt an
entire region;

A progenie born of a cursid lyne
May thoruh his froward fals infeccioun,

5076

5042. ialousie] Ieulosie R. 5044. it] om. H.
5054. all did] thei B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P. 5058. ne] nor H.
5067. kyng] thyng R. 5077. fals froward R.

Outward be colour of trouthe thouth he shyne,
 Vnder apparence and symulacioun
 Infecte and corupte al a regeoun;
 For, it is seid of ful old langage,
 Frut of sour trees take a sour tarage.

for the fruit
 of sour trees
 has a sour
 flavour.

5080

This was weel shewed in Artaxerses,
 That suffred his brother deien at myscheeff,
 Bledyng his wounde, left hym help[e]lles,
 Which to his name shal euer been repreff.
 Thus blood vnkynde vnkyndli makth his preeff;
 For al the childre fro his stok descendid
 Wer cursid echon, as heer is comprehendid.

This was well
 proven by
 Artaxerxes,
 who let his
 brother die
 helpless, and
 whose children
 were cursed.

5084

5088

Ther stock was first contagious of nature,
 The griffes froward, thouth thei wer gret in noumbre,
 Which of assent dide ther besi cure
 Bi fals tresoun ther fader to encoumbre.
 But ther is no shade nor no couert ouble
 So closli kept, namli of fals[e] guile,
 But the venym wil shewen oute sum while.

The stock was
 noxious and the
 grafts and
 branches
 froward,
 although large
 in number.

5092

5096

And thus the deth contagiousli conspired
 Of Artaxerses sithe go ful yore,
 Wheron tauenge, hys herte was so fired
 Of furious ire & Ibrent so sore,
 That he nat koude differre it ferthermore,
 But with his meyne fill on hem anon
 Or thei wer war, and slouh hem euerichon.

Artaxerxes fell
 on them with
 his soldiers
 unawares and
 slew every one.

5100

He slouh also al his concubynes,
 That wer ther mōddres, of whom I told toform,
 Suffred non to lyue of [al] ther lynes;
 So of that lynage he hath the weed upshorn,
 Fond among alle no greyn of good[e] corn:
 Convict bi doom, whan thei wer presentid,
 How to his deth echon thei wer assentid.

He also killed
 his concubines,
 their mothers,

5104

5108

His clothes spreynt with the vnkynde blood
 Of his childre, which he dide sheede,
 Aftir whos deth in gret myscheeff he stood;
 And so in sorwe his lyff he dide leede, —
 Deied aftir in myscheef & in dreede.
 Deth quit with deth, & rage with rage:
 Loo, heer the fyn of his vnweeldi age!

and after living
 the rest of his
 life in sorrow,
 he himself died

5112

5116

5078. he] they R, she H.

5095. namli] onely H.

5099. was] om. R.

5101. nat] ne H.

5106. al] om. R, J, R 3, P.

5116. 1st deth] Seth R.

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¶ [Lenvoye.]

This tragedie
describes the
enmity between
two brothers,
which led to
war and the
destruction of
their kindred.

THIS tragedie afforn declareth heere
The grete outrage of vnkyndenesse,
Atween too brethre regnyng bothe ifeere 5120
In Perse-lond, as ye han herd expresse,
Til dyuisioun, of al myscheef maistresse,
Gan entren in thoruh fraternal hatreede,
Which ageyn kynde destroied ther kynreede. 5124
The werre aroos, contagious for to lere,
Thoruhout al Perse of mortal frowardnesse,
Of Cirus deth rehersyng the maneere,
How help[e]les he deied in distresse, 5128
And how the noumbre of brethre dide hem dresse
To slen ther fader — the story ye may reede, —
Causing an eende of al ther hool kynreede.

Artaxerxes slew
his children
together with
their mothers
and soon
afterwards died.

Kyng Artaxerxes, with a froward cheere, 5132
His iniuries & wronges to redresse,
Slouh his childre, ther moodres eek ifeere,
Spared nat oon, of cruel hastynesse.*
Bi which occasioun took a gret siknesse, 5136
Aftir deied in myscheef & in dreede,
Causing an eende of al his hool kynreede.

The abomination
of fraternal
strife spread all
over Persia,
infecting the
air with foul,
slandorous
blackness.

Loo, heer a sorwe nat particuleer;
For thoruh al Perse ran the cursidnesse, 5140
The crokid fame sprad bothe ferr & neer
Of this vengable, hasti, fel woodnesse,
The hair infectyng *with* sclaudrous foul blaknesse,
To shewe be vengauce the contrarious meede 5144
Of blood vnkynde boorn of oon kynreede.

Noble Princes,
avoid rancour,
remember the
mischief that
follows blood
unkind, born
of one kindred.

Noble Princis, left up your eyen cleere [p. 207]
And considreth, bi gret auisynesse,
The woful stryues, the odious fel daungeere 5148
Sowe in kynreedis of wilful straungenesse.
Of al rancour your corages doth represe,
Peisyng the myscheeuys folwyng on in deede
Of blood vnkynde born of o kynreede. 5152

¶ Explicit liber tercius.

5126. Thoruhout] Thoruh R.

5132. *This stanza and the next are transposed R.*

5135. cruel hastynesse] froward cursednesse B, J, R, P.

5143. foul] *om.* R. 5148. fel] fals H, R 3, H 5.

BOOK IV

¶ *Incipit prohemium libri quarti.*

FRU^t of writyng set in cronicles olde,
Most delectable of fresshnesse in tastyng,
And most goodli & glorious to beholde,
In cold and heete lengest abidyng,
Chaung of cesouns may doon it non hyndryng;
And wher-so be that men dyne or faste,
The mor men taste, the lenger it wil laste.

The fruit of old
writings remains
fresh always;
it is harmed by
no change of
season, and the
4 more men taste
of it, the longer
it lasts.

It doth corages renewe ageyn & glade,
Which may be callid frut of the tre of lyff,
So parmanable that it wil neuer fade.
To the fyue wittis grettest restoratiff,
And to ther plesance most cheef confortatiff;
For of nature whan thei be quik & goode,
Thei of this frut tak ther natural foode.

8 It gives us new
heart, as if it
were the fruit
of the tree of
life,

Auctours heeron conclude and eek assente,
How that writyng of his kyndeli riht
Doth loid personis & liknessis represente
Of freendis absent, seuered fer from siht;
Dirknesse of absençe is clerid with the liht,—
Thus frut of writyng hath his auantages,
Of folk ferr off to presente the images.

16 and clears
away the dark-
ness of absence
and brings the
images of loved
ones, who may
be far away,
near to us.

Lawe hadde perished, nadde be writyng;
Our feith appalled, ner vertu of scripture;
For al religioun and ordre of good lyuyng
Takth ther exauple be doctryn of lettrure.
For thyng causeth, with helpe of portraiture,
That thynges dirked, of old that wer begonne,
To be remembered with this celestial sonne.

24 Were it not
for writing, law
had perished
and our faith
grown dim and
faint.

5. non] no H. 10. permanble R, *permanable* H, R 3.
15. conclude heeron H.
20. Thus] This H — wrytynges R.
22. nadde be] had be H.
25. Takth] Tak R.
26. portrateur R.

28

God ordained
writing to offset
the dulness of
our nature, to
illumine the
world by
eloquence, to
asseal covenants
and make
agreements sure.

Diligence,
triumphant over
sloth, has by
its labour
brought things
long passed into
fresh remem-
brance.

It is through
writing that
we know the
lives of old
patriarchs and
prophets and
the martyrs
who upheld the
banner of Christ.

The diligence of
writers is like
a beautiful tree
that blossoms
and bears fruit
every year.

The Epigrams
of Prosper,
Seneca's
Tragedies, the
Stratagems of
Vegetius and
the Satires of
Persius had all
vanished, but
for writing, that
vouchsafes to
poets their
eternal name.
Take record of
Virgil, the
Mantuan, who,
sovereign of
his style,
wrote of Aeneas
and Dido.

God sette writyng & lettres in sentence,
Ageyn the dulnesse of our infirmyte,
This world tenlumyne be crafft of elloquence;
Canoun, cyuile, philosophie — these thre
Confermed fraunchises of many strong cite,
Couenauntis asselid, trouthis of old assured,
Nadde writyng been, myht nat haue endurid.

Dilligence, cheef triumphatrice
Of slogardie, necligence & slouthe,
Eek of memorye upholdere and norice
And registrear to suppowaille trouthe,
Hath of old labour (& ellis wer gret routhe)
Brouhte thynges passid, notable in substaunce,
Onli be writyng to newe remembrance.

Writyng is cause that herto is remembrid
Lyf of prophetis & patriarches olde,
How thapostlis and martirs wer dismembrid
For Cristis feith, his baner up to holde.
And writyng sheweth, toforn as I you tolde,
Of confessours the grete stedfastnesse,
And of virgynes the virgynal clenness.

Lik to a tre which euery yeer berth frut, [p. 208]
Shewyng his beute with blosmys & with flours,
Riht so the foode of our inward reffut,
Be dilligence of these olde doctours
And daili frut of ther feithful labours
Han our corages fostred & pasturid
Be writyng onli, which hath so longe endurid.

The Epigrames whilom perished hadde
Of prudent Prosper, that was so vertuous,
And of Senec the tragedies sadde,
The Stratagemys of Vigecius,
Rebuk in vicis of noble Percivs, —
Yif in olde writyng hadde be founde a lak,
These said[e] thynges hadde fer be put abak.
Writyng caused poetis to recure
A name eternal, the laurer whan thei wan,
In adamaunt graue perpetuelli tendure.
Record I take of Virgile Mantuan,

29. lettris & writyng H.

31. to elumyne R.

39. Registeer H. 51. shewith H.

That wrot the armys & prowesse of the man 68
 Callid Eneas, whan he of hih corage
 Cam to Itaiill from Dido of Cartage.

Thre famous bookis this auctour list compile,
 Eneidoys first; which that dide excell 72
 In rethorik be souereynte of stile.

He drank swich plente, this poete, as men tell,
 Of the stremys that ran doun fro the well
 Wrouhte bi tho sustres that be in noumbre nyne, 76
 Prowesse of kniethod most cleerli to termyne.

For in that book he cast[e] nat to fail,
 With vois mellodious for to descryue ariht
 The grete conquest of Rome & of Itaiill
 Wrouht bi Enee, the manli Troian kniht.
 Whos vers notable yif so cleer a liht
 Thoruh al the world[e], as in rethorik,
 That among poetis was non onto hym lik. 84

and described
 the conquest of
 Rome and
 Italy.
 80 No poet was
 his equal.

He wrot also, this poete with his hond
 Bi humble stile othir bookis tweyne,
 Oon of pasture, the nexte of tilthe of lond,
 The vers conveied with feet of metris pleyne.
 Bi which thre labours a palme he dide atteyne,
 To make his name throuh dites delitable
 Aboue poetis to be most comendable.

He also wrote
 about pastoral
 life and a Book
 of Tylth in
 metrical verse,
 attaining a palm
 88 above all other
 poets.

Wrytyng of poetis hath set withynne his cloos 92
 Conquest of kniethod, ther tryumphes & renouns.
 Reed of Ouide Mëthamorphoseos,
 The grete wondres, the transmutaciouns,
 The moral menyng, [th]vnkouth conclusiouns,
 His book de Ponto, & with gret dilligence 96
 Ful many a pistil compleynyng for absence.

Read Ovid's
 Metamorphoses,
 his *Epistulae ex*
Ponto, his
Tristia, his *Ars*
amatoria,
 because of
 which Augustus
 96 exiled him, his
Remedia
amoris.

Of craft of loue a book he hath compiled,
 Wheroff Cesar hadde ful gret disdeyn, 100
 Which was cause that he was exilled
 Tabide in Ponto, and neuer come ageyn.
 And yit he dide his labour in certeyn,
 In hope of grace, his wittis to applie 104
 To write a book of lous remedie.

69. whan he] which H. 72. Eneidos R, Enoydos H.
 79. vois] wise R. 87. Oon] And R. 90. delectable R.
 96. thvnkouth] vnkouth R, J, P, R 3. J omits lines 99-288.
 102. come] to cum H.

- And remember Petrarch,
laureate in Rome, and his
Book of Two Fortunes, his
Eclogues and Cosmography,
his Psalms of Repentance,
his Epic of Africa, *De Vita solitaria* and
his Book of Ignorance, who
got himself a perpetual name
by his writing. Read his Letters
Without a Title and his Book
of Famous Women.
- Wrytyng of old, with lettres aureat,
Labour of poetis doth hihli magnefie,
Record on Petrak, in Rome laureat, 108
Which of too Fortunys wrot the remedie,
Certeyn Ecloogis and his Cosmographie,
And a gret conflict, which men may reede & see,
Of his querellis withynne hymself secre. 112
- He wrot seuene Psalmys of gret repentaunce,
And in his Affrik comendid Scipioun,
And wrot a book of his ignoraunce
Bi a maner of excusacioun, 116
And sette a notable compilacioun
Vpon the lyff[e] callid solitarie,
To which this world is froward and contrarie.
- And thus be wrytyng he gat hymself a name 120
Perpetuelli to been in remembraunce,
Set and registred in the Hous of Fame,
And made Epistles of ful hih substaunce
Callid Sine Titulo; & mor hymself tauaunce, 124
Of famous women he wrot the excellence,
Gresilde preferring for hir gret pacience.
- It is also remembered in
writing how Troy was
destroyed, the slaughter of
Hector and Homer's ex-
clusive praise of Achilles, who
wrought all by fraud.
- Wrytyng also remembrid hath how Troye 128
Destroied was, sith[en] go many a yeer,
The slaughtre of Ector, cheef piler of ther ioie.
And for the parti of Grekis wrot Omer,
Which in his wrytyng was particuleer;
For Tachille, that wrouhte al be fraude, 132
Aboue Ector he gaf a synguler laude.
- Writing makes green the
chaplets of Æsop and
Juvenal, and on Dante it bestows
celestial fame.
- Wrytyng causeth the chaplet to be greene [p. 209]
Bothe of Esope and of Iuuenal;
Dantis labour it doth also meyntheene 136
Bi a report verray celestial,
Sunge among Lumbardis in especial,
Whos thre bookis the grete wondres tell
Of heuene aboue, of purgatorie & hell. 140
- Through writing men learn of
the miracles and holiness of the
blessed saints, of medicines and
salves and staunches for
mortal wounds.
- Men be wrytyng knowe the meracles
Of blissid seyntes & of ther hoolynesse,
Medecyne[s], salue & eek obstacles
Geyn mortal woundis and eueri gret seeknesse, 144
Recreacioun and solace in distresse,

113. Psalmys] palmys R. 114. his] om. R.

132. Tachille] to Achilles H, tachilles R 3, P.

140. hell] of hell H. 144. Geyn] ageyne H.

Quiete in labour, in pouert pacience,
And in richesse riht, trouthe and conscience.

¶ Shortnesse of lyff and foryetilnesse,
The wit of man dul & ay slidyng,
Necligence and froward idilnesse, —
Echon stepmooder to science and konnyng,
That I dar sey[e]n, nadde be writyng
Onli ordeyned for our auantages,
Ded wer memorie & mynde of passid ages.

And thus in cheef thes causes affor told
Meued the herte of Bochas to writyng,
And to remembre be many story old
Thestat of pryncis, in chaieres hih sittyng,
And for vices ther vnwar fallyng,
Yiuuyng exaample, as I afferme dar,
Of fals Fortune how thei shal be war.

His firste thre bookis be ful cleer merours,
Fulli acomplished, as Bochas vndirtook,
The cause of fallyng of many conquerours,
Onli for trouthe and vertu thei forsook.
For which myn auctour toward his fourte book
Gan sharpe his penne, to his eternal fame,
Onli be writyng to geten hym a name.

Myn auctour Bochas, that so moche koude,
Begynneth heer to make a processe
Ageyn thourage of pryncis that wer proude,
Which wer brouht lowe for ther frowardnesse,
And notabli remembreth how* meeknesse,
Which stondeth hool in oon & doth contune,
Is ay fraunchised fro daunger of Fortune.

But he in maner doth recapitle ageyn
The fal of many that sat on hih[e] stages,
How thei for vices stood ay in noun certeyn,
Cam to myscheef for ther gret outrages.

148 Shortness of
life and lack
of memory,
negligence and
idleness, would
have destroyed
the mind of past
ages, had it not
152 been for writing.

For these
reasons Bochas
156 was moved to
tell the tale of
princes, who
sat on high
thrones and
fell because
of their vices.

160

His first three
books com-
pleted, he
164 sharpened his
pen

168

and began
a process
against the
outrages of
proud princes,
who were
172 brought low
for their
perversity.

176 He recapitu-
lated the fall of
Priam, who
sustained
adultery,

148. H has large initial.

151. Echon] om. H.

153. avantage H. 154. Age H.

155. cheef] myscheef (but mys crossed out) B — thes] ther R
— to fore R.

158. chaires R, chaires H.

162. be] bi R. 169. moche gode koude R.

170. Begynnyng R. 173. how] the B.

176. recapitle] a Chapitle H.

Remembryng first of Priam the damages, 180
 And how he loste sceptre and regalie
 For sustenyng of fals auoutrye.

and of Astyages,
 who married his
 daughter to
 Cambyzes, a
 man of low
 birth,

The fal rehersyng of Astriages,
 That gaf his douhtir whilom in mariage 184
 To oon that was Icallid Cambises,
 A poore man bor[e]n of louh lynage,
 For he shold[e] ha[ue] non auauntage
 In no maner, nouthur in riht nor wrong, 188
 Bi rebelloun ageyn hym to be strong.

so that
 there should be
 no male born
 of his line who
 could put him
 from his throne.
 Yet, after all,
 Fortune over-
 threw him.

For he tofforn hadde had aveseoun,
 How ther shold oon procedyn of his lyne,
 Which sholde hym putte out of his regeoun 192
 And cause hym in myscheef for to fyne.
 But yit Fortune koude hym vndermyne,
 That al his wisdam stood in non auail;
 For ageyn God preuaileth no counsail. 196

I need not tell
 his story here,
 or the story
 of Cyrus or
 King Tarquin.

It needeth nat his story to reherse,
 Nor the maner of his vnhappi chaunce,
 Nor the fallyng of Cirus kyng of Perse, 200
 Nor of kyng Tarquyn for his mys gouernaunce,
 Thouh Bochas heer put hem in remembraunce.
 For as me semeth, it wer a thyng in veyn,
 Thyng onys told to telle it newe ageyn.

Nor did Bochas
 again rehearse
 the tale of
 Artaxerxes.
 It has already
 been told, and
 Bochas begins
 here with
 Marcus Manlius.

And he list nat now to be rek[e]les, 204
 Newe ageyn to make rehersaile
 Of the kyng callid Artaxerxes;
 Sithe it is told, what sholde it mor auaile?
 But he procedith streiht onto Itaille 208
 To telle ther stories, and begynneth heer
 At Marchus Manlius, a Romeyn consuleer.

¶ Finis Prologi.

181. loste] left H.

183. fal] fals H.

185. callid R.

190. a vision R, P, a visioun H, avision R 3, avycioun H 5 —
 had] om. R.

202. as] om. H.

208. onto] in to H.

210. At] Of H — Marcus Manlius H, Mallius R.

¶ Incipit liber quartus.

[Howe marchus manlius wrought and dyd for Rome
toun/ And at the laste he was by the comons
caste into* Tibre and there drowned.]¹

WHILOM in Rome ther was a gret lynage [p.211] The Manlius
gens was
Callid Manliois, of renommed noblesse, 212 celebrated in
And of that stok, riht fair in his yong age, Rome, and
Cam this Marchus, his stori berth witesse. Marcus, thrice
Which bi processe for his worthynesse consul, was one
Was thre tymes be iust eleccioun of its
Maad consuleer of that worthi toun. 216 descendants.

Which to the comoun ful gretli dide auaile,
He dyuers times for the toun[e]s riht He often fought
Fauht in his daies many strong bataile, for the town,
And ay preuailede thoruh his grete myht, and after he
And in the feeld[e] bi a synguler fihht 220 had won a rich
Outraied his enemy, lik as it is told, arm-ring of gold
And took from hym a riche bie of gold. 224 from an enemy
in single
combat, he

Torques in Latin, in Inglissh is a bie, was called
A cercl[e] of gold, which that Marchus wan. Marcus
Brouht[e] it hom thoruh his cheualrie; Torquatus; for
And of torques, he was callid than Torques in Latin
Marchus Torquatus; & thus the name gan, means a ring.
He to be callid, the stori tellith vs, 228
Among Romeyns Torquatus Manlius.

And he wolde ofte iuparte good & liff, 232 He also won
For the cite entre the feeld allone, many crowns of
And ther conquered for a prerogatiff gold; and in
Sondri crownes, with many riche stone, those days
Wan* tunicles of gold ful many one; crowns were the
For thilke tyme, for dyuers hih emprises reward of great
Wer crownis maad in many sondri wises. 236 emprises

212. Malliois R, Manlyoys H, Manlioys R 3, P.

214. Marcus H, P — his] þe H. 218. ful] om. H.

222. fihht] siht R.

229. began R.

230. vs] thus H.

231. Mallius R.

235. many a H.

236. Wan] Whan B, R — ful] om. H, R 3, P.

¹ Supplied from Pr, n. 6 recto (below cut and Incipit). For
into read nito.

and, as Aulus Gellius says, were given to men who, after they had fought and risked their lives for the town, were called champions.

For as Agellius maketh mencion,
Ther wer in Rome deuised straunge crouns 240
For such as hadden fouhten for the toun,
And* for ther labour resceyued ther guerdouns,
Bi a prerogatiff callid champiouns,
Which sondry tymes of manhood & of myht 244
Iuparted ther lyff* for the toun[e]s riht.

There were Triumphal, Obsidional, Mural, and Naval crowns, and a crown called Castrence.

Lik ther desertis thes crown[e]s took ther names;
For summe of them wer callid Tryumphal,
Youe onto knihtes for ther noble fames. 248
Othir also callid Obsidional

In Romeyn tunge; & summe ther wer Mural, —
Eek other tweyne, Nauall and Castrence,
And alle thei wern of ful gret excellence. 252

Triumphal crowns were given to emperors and mighty conquerors.

The Tryumphal maked wer of gold,
Offred in tryumphes to worthi emperours,
Set with saphirs and rubies manyfold
Vpon the hedis of myhti conquerours. 256
And whan that Rome was shynnyng in his flours,
That crowne callid, *with* braunchis boornid faire,
In ther vulgar Thaureat Coronaire.

Obsidional crowns were wrought like grain or corn and presented to those who relieved besieged cities.

Thobsydyonal, of which I spak tofforn, 260
Deuised wern, the book doth specesife,
Crown[e]s notable wrouht lik greyn or corn,
Youe onto princis which thoruh ther cheualrie
Reskewed seeges and saued the partie 264
Of hem that wer[e] closed streiht withynne,
Thoruh hih prowesse a crowne for to wynne.

The Mural crown of laurel was granted to him who first ascended the wall of an assaulted stronghold,

Another crowne, that callid was Mural,
Was youe and grauntid bi the emperour 268
To hym that firste wan vpon the wal
At any seege, and ther abood the shour
Fihtyng allone, in hope of sum socour.
And he that myht[e] such a brunt susteene, 272
Sholde of laurer were a crowne greene.

and Naval crowns, carved like rudders, were ordained for those who first entered the ship of an enemy.

Nauall crownes whilom wer ordeyned
For them that fauht[e] manli on the se,
Whan ther shippis wer togidre-cheyned, — 276
He that of manhod & marcial surete
Vpon his enmyes made first entre

239. Aulus Gellius P. 242. And] As B — labours R.
243. callid] maade R. 245. lyff] lyues B. 246. thes] be H.
252. excellence] reverence H, R 3. 253. The] This R.

Resceyue sholde, in al the peeplis siht,
Korue lich a rother, a crowne cleer & briht.

280

The nexte crowne, which callid is* Castrence,
Was youe of custum to that manli kniht
That list auauunce hym thoruh his magnificence,
Hostes assemblede, iuparte wolde of myht
Tofforn al other [t]entren into fht,
Sholde eek resseyue, his noblesse for to queeme,
A sterriid crowne maad lik a diadeeme.

The starred
crown called
Castrence was
received by
that knight who
entered into
battle before all
other men,

284

The crowne also which callid was Oual
Took first name of ioie and gladnesse,
Which kynges, princis in actis marcial
Vsid somtyme in ther ioious noblesse
At sodeyn skarmysshes of casuel hastynesse,
As whan thei venquysshed proudli in bataille
Such as ther hihnesse vnwarli wolde assaille.

and the Oval
crown by the
victor in a
sudden
skirmish.

288

292

And for thei wern of poweer invyncible,
Ther noble crownis coriousli wer wrouht
Of mirtis branchis, which been inputrible,
Enduryng euere and corupte nouht.
For this woord Oual, yif it be weel souht,
Is seid of gladnesse, as put is in memorie,
Ordeyned for pryncis after ther victorie.

[p. 212] It was wrought
of myrtle
branches, which
never corrupt.

296

300

Anothir crowne callid Cyuyca,
Of oken bowes was maad[e] round & pleyn,
Ordeyned for them which *pro Re Publica*
Koude in bataille reskewe a citeseyn
And slen his enmy that was a foreyn.
Of myhti ok he sholde for manheed
Cleyme to were a crowne upon his hed.

The Civic
crown, made
of oak boughs,
was the reward
for rescuing a
citizen in battle
and slaying his
enemy.

304

308

And lik as knihtis in marcial delites,
For comoun profit dede hemsilf auauunce,
So for ther noble victorious merites
The Romeyn peepple hadde a gret plesance,
With sundri crownis marcial in substaunce,

As Aulus
Gellius records,
the Romans
took great
pleasure in thus
rewarding their
famous knights.

312

281. is callid B, R.

285. tentren] entren R.

291. ther] the R.

296. wer] was R.

297. mirtis] Marcus H, Martys H 5, mirthis R 3 — imputrible
J, R, H, P.

308. a] bat H.

312. Romeyn peepple] Romayns H.

For to guerdone ther knihtis most famous,
Myn auctour record callid Agellius.

Marcus Manlius
often risked his
life, and won
many crowns,

Among other that dede ther besi peyne
Such[e] crownis manli to recure,
Marcus Manlius, in manhod souereyne,
Put ofte his lyff in mortal auenture;
For in his force so moche he dide assure,
That he deserued ful yore agon
Of these said crownes many mo than oon.

316

and was given
the surname
Capitolinus

And to [the] encre of his noble fame
He dede a thyng bothe manli & dyuyn,
Wherbi that he gat hym a surname
To be callid Marchus Capitolyne,
Which aboue alle his namis dide shyne, —
Whan he allone, wherbi he is comendid,
The Capitoile from enmyes hath defendid.

324

328

at the time
that the
French captured
the city and
tried to take
the Capitol

Whan thei of Fraunce hadde taken the cite,
Put al Rome at myscheef onto fliht,
And leid await[e] with a gret meyne
The Capitoile for to take at niht,
Bi a passage that lay ferr out of siht
Vnder a roche callid Carmentoun,
Ther taue entred into the cheef dongoun.

332

336

by climbing
along a dark
valley at mid-
night and
scaling the wall
in a surprise
attack.

Thei wer ther shrowdid vndir a dirk[e] vale,
With ordynaunce and myhti violence
Toward mydnyht the wal[le] for to scale,
Most couertli them keepyng in scilence;
Dempte pleykli, for lak* of resistance,
That thei sholde, maugre tho withyne,
Ther hour assigned, the Capitoile wyne.

340

But the brave
geese beat their
wings and made
such a com-
motion that
Marcus awoke,

But the ges that wer wit[h]ynne cloos,
The waker foules be noise of ther komyng
Gan bete ther weenges, & up anon aros,
Wherthoruh this Marcus in his bed liggyn
Gan tabraide, & made no tarieng,
Took his harneis, most furious & wroth,
And to the wallis in al haste he goth.

344

348

315. A. Gellius P.

318. Mallius R.

325. that] *om.* H — gat] gaff R.333. to] *om.* R.

337. Thei] Ther R. 341. lak] lakkyng B, J.

343. the] ther H. 346. aros] thei aros R.

And hym that cam first upon the wall,
Of verray force, withoute mor tarieng,
Doun into Tibre he made hem haue a fall;
And all his felawes bisi in scalyng,
With sheeld or pauys, or ladders up reising,
This manli Mark, shortli to comprehende,
Into the flood he made hem to descende.

and, rushing to
the wall, threw
the enemy one
after another
into the Tiber.

Vnto the deth, of hym thei wer abauyd;
For bi his kniethod & his hih renoun,
Maugre them, the Capitoile sauid
And aftirward rescued al the toun.
[And] for the fortune, in conclusioun,
Which that tyme dide vnto hym fall,
Capitolinus men dede hym aftir call.

They were cast
down by him to
their death, and
thus the Capitol
was saved.

And for he was so victorious,
Hymself allone be this hih victorie,
This name he gat to hym & al his hous,
Perpetueli to been in memory
And registred in the consistorie,
In ther cronicles his name determyned,
With goldene lettres to been enlumyned.

For this deed
the name
Capitolinus
was given to
him and his
family in
perpetuity.

And the gees, of whom I spak also,
That so weel kepte wach upon the niht,
Itake wern and offired to Iuno
Solempneli with gret[e] torchis liht,
To whom also it grauntid was of riht,
Whan a famyne maad her stoor to faile,
Thei spared wern & take for no vitaile.

And the geese
were made
sacred to Juno
and never eaten
in time of
famine.

And thus was Marcus lik a* conquerour
Worsheped in Rome, alle beyng of assent.
But whan summe folk be set in gret honour,
Sumtyme it happeth thei holde hem nat content,
With couetise ther hertis be so blent,
Fro suffisaunce, aboue ther degrees
To surmounte to hier dignites.

[p. 213] Marcus received
all the worship
of a conqueror;
380 but, like many
other men set
in high honour,
he was not
content,

This Manlius was fret in his corage
To gretter worshepis sodenli tascende,
Deemyng so to haue had auantage,

but wanted to
transcend his
equals,

353. hem] hym H. 362. And] om. R. 374. to] onto R.

379. Marcus lik a] Mark a mihti B, R, J, Marc lik a H, R 3, P,
H 5.

383. so be H.

- And in hymself gan frowardli pretende
In that cite al othir to transcende,
Beside tryumphes, which wer to hym reserued,
Hiere to clymbe than he hath disserued. 392
- and became
jealous of a
lord named
Camillus, the
greatest man in
Rome, governor
of the city,
But ther was oon, as maad is mencion,
Callid Camyllus, a lord of gret substaunce,
Which in the cite & in that myhti toun
Aboue al othir hadde gouernaunce. 396
- And as it is Iput in remembraunce,
To his gretnesse non othir myht atteyne,
At whos noblesse Marchus gan disdeyne.
- and rebelled
against him.
In his herte he hadde a gret envie,
Which caused hym bi outrage for to erre
Ageyn Camyllus, which for his cheualrie
The toun gouerned bothe in pes and werre.
And for Marchus wolde hymself preferre 404
Aboue that prynce in worshepe and honour,
First of the peeple he gat hym gret fauour.
- And as he was
popular he drew
many of the
people to his
side
And bi a maner of conspiracie
He gadred hertis of the comounte,
And drouh also onto his partie
Gret multitude thoruhout the cite.
And thus roos first the dreedful enmyte
Withynne Rome, the story tellith thus, 412
Atween these pryncis, Camyll & Manlius.
- and caused
great dissension.
Thus first the venym atween hem two was sowe
Of hasti hatreede bi fals occasiouns.
Which in the cite atween hih & lowe 416
Caused of newe dyuers discenciouns,
Aftir the[r] vnkouth straunge oppynyons;
For eueri wiht drouh to his partie,
As thei wer meued in ther fantasie. 420
- To put a stop
to the strife a
dictator named
Cornelius Cassius
came from
Tuscany and
put Marcus in
gaol,
But for to stynte this outrageous errour
And thes hasti stryues furious,
Ageyn fro Tuscan kam a dictatour,
That tyme callid Cornelius Cassus, 424
Which of wisdam blamed Manlius;

395. Which] with in R — that] be H.

396. hadde] om. R. 397. Iput] put R.

398. non othir] nomayn R.

410. thoruhout] thoruh R.

418. ther vnkouth straunge] ther straunge vncouth H.

For he caused such rumour in the town,
And for his gilt comaunded hym to prisoun.

Which was in maner hyndryng to his name,
And appalled in parti his noblesse;
For a tyme gan teclipse his fame,
But aftirward the cloude of that derknesse
Bi comoun fauour was turned to cleernesse:
For as it hadde be riht for the nonys,
In his diffence the comouns roos attonis.

428 which for
a time eclipsed
his fame; but
the commons
soon rose in his
defence,

432

First whan thei hadde among ther gret rumours,
Mid of ther fell [&] hatful contencioun
Shortli rebuked the worthi senatours,
Because Marcus was sette in prisoun,
Which hadde been so helplich to the town.
Whom to delyuere thei dyuers menys souhte,
And, as I fynde, euene thus thei wrouhte:

436 rebuking the
Senate because
it had allowed
him to be so
humiliated,

440

First thei cladde hem in moornyng clothes blake,
Pale of ther facis, pitousli weepyng,
Ther berd vnshaue, ther her to-reende & shake,
Lik furious men up and doun rennyng
Tofor the prisoun, al the niht wakyng.
And on his harmes pleyntly to be wreke,
Thei gan manace the prisoun for to breke.

444 and, dressing
themselves in
black, set up
such a wailing
and tumult
before the
prison,

448

And for to stynte ther outraious clamour
The senatour[e]s made anon ordeyne
To delyuere hym out of his soiour,
Losne his feteres and to breke his cheyne.
And whan he was delyuered out of peyne,
His list nat stynte, of hasti cruelte
Of proude corage auengid for to be.

452 that the
Senators
ordered
Marcus to be
freed.
But no sooner
was he released
than he wanted
to be revenged.

And in his furious fel presumpcioun,
Maugre the senat and tribunys euerichon,
Saide he wolde gouerne Rome town.
At whos outrage thei gan disdeyne anon;
The peeplis hertis from hym wer agon,
And for his pride thei bausement
Assigned hym to come to iugement.

456 and presump-
tuously said
that he would
govern Rome
himself. This
lost him his
popularity,

460

Forsake he was thoruhout the cite,
Ther cam nat oon with hym of his kynreede,
He fond non helpe in his aduersite,

[p. 214] and, forsaken by
the commons,
464 he was brought
to judgment.

Sauff a fewe cam with hym in deede
Of the comouns, ful feeble at such a neede.
And thus, alas, he fond no resistance
Was vailable onto his diffence.

468

Knowing no other help, he
took off his clothes and
shewed the wounds he had
received in defending the
city

But for socour constreyned and in dreede,
Awey he putte his clothynge & vesture,
And naked stood[e], veraili in deede,
Shewyng his woundis, which he dede endure
At many scarmyssh and disconfiture.
And for reskus, to speke in woordes fewe,
The Capitoile to them he dide shewe.

472

and cried in a loud voice to his
gods for aid.
At this the people began to
weep, and the judges were so
put out of countenance
that,

And in supportyng eek of his quarell,
Meeuyng the peeple to rewe on his compleynt,
First to his goddis loude he dide appell
To preserue hym of that he was atteynt.
The peeple aboute hym with teris al bespreynt,
That the iuges astoned wer in deede,
Wher-as thei sat ageyn hym to proceede.

476

fearing another rebellion, they
had him led out secretly and
thrown from the Capitol into the
Tiber.

But secreli he was lad out of pres
To a place callid Frowmentyne,
And ther, alas, thei wer [so] merciles
His doom bi rigour fulli to termyne,
Spared nouter noblesse nor lyne:
Fro the Capitoile, out of the cheef donioun,
Lowe into Tibre for to be cast down.

484

No man can describe by
writing the insecurity of
those who labor for any
community.

This was his eende, void of al fauour,
Which no man wolde redressen nor amende,
Bi cruelte cast out of that tour,
Which he whilom most knihtli gan diffende.
But what man can be writyng comprehende
Thunseur socour founde in necessite
To them that laboure for any comounte?

488

492

496

Let proud men who trust in
worldly things consider the
fate of Marcus.

Lat men beholde, that truste on worldli thynges,
And namli them that be proude and hauteyn,
Opne ther eyen, cast up ther lookynges
To considre & see weel in certeyn,

500

475. reskew H.

479. loude] low R. 86. so] om. 4J, R.

488. nor] ne H. 490. a down H.

498. on] & R.

499. them] thay H, thei R 3, they P — a horizontal line is drawn
over the u in hauteyn, B.

500. Opne] Opon R.

Who trusteth Fortune, his truste is but in veyn!
 And yif ye list a cleer exaample fynde,
 Among remembreth on Marcus in your mynde. 504

What myhte auaile his noblesse in bataile?
 Bies of gold, crownes of laurer?
 His riche platis or his vnkouth maile,
 His myhti sheeldis, that shon so briht & cleer? 508
 Or his tryumphes, songe ferr & neer,
 Or his victories for the cite wrouht? —
 In his gret myscheeff auailed hym riht nouht.

What did his
 prowess, his
 crowns of gold
 and laurē,
 his strong
 armour and
 tryumphs avail?

[Here Bochas writeth in part ayenst / suche as
 cannot be content with suffisaunce / but vsurpe
 to hihe dignitees.]¹

HEER Iohn Bochas callith to memorye 512
 The straunge salaire [and] þe famous guerdoun
 Of them þat gat bi conquest & victorie
 Honour of tryumphe withynne Rome toun;
 How it was vsid, he maketh mencion,
 Ceriousli reherseth the manere, 516
 Which I shal write, yif ye list to heere.

Here John
 Bochas tells of
 the rewards
 received by
 those who won
 victories for
 Rome.

Auis was take first of estatis thre:
 Of men of armyes, which that wer present, 520
 That sauh in deede the magnanymyte
 Of hym that shal haue it be iugement;
 Of the clergie thet muste haue eek assent,
 And of the senat and peeple most notable, 524
 Be preef souht out that he wer founde able.

A triumph was
 granted with
 the assent of
 the three
 estates,

This prynce also, outhur the capteyn,
 Which shal the tryumphe resceyue of verray riht,
 Withyne a chaar, ful richeli beseyn 528
 He shal be set, of gold bornid briht,
 Fret with stonis, which shal yiue a liht

and the
 triumphator
 rode through
 the city in a
 chariot of gold
 adorned with
 gems

506. laureer] Laureate H.

509. &] or H.

511. mischeffs R — *In inner margins*: "Hic deficit rubrica"

R, "deficit Rubrica" B.

513. salary H — and] om. R, J, P.

523. the] ther R.

525. preef] trowth H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 87 recto.

As Phebus doth in his midday speere,
That no dirknesse aboute hym shal appeere. 532

drawn by
four white
horses.

This heuenli chaar shal for mor delit,
To shewe thencre of his knihtli glorie,
Be lad and drawe with foure steedis whiht
Thoruh the cite in tokne of his victorie. 536
And he shal han, for a synguler memorye,
In his riht hand a palme of gold ful sheene,
And on his hed a crowne of laureer greene.

He bore a palm
of gold in his
right hand and
was crowned
with laurel.
Over his
armour he wore
a garment of
purple powdered
with palms, and
in his left hand
he held a
crimson standard
decorated with
the arms of his
prince. He was
escorted to the
Capitol like a
conqueror,

He shal eek haue aboue al his armure, [p. 215] 540
Poudrid with palmys a cote of purpil red,
In his left hand, his quarellis for tassure,
A standard round declaryng his manhed,
And al aboue set upon the hed 544
The pryncis armys, ful riche of apparaille,
In whos quarell he accomplished the* bataille.

And of custum the said[e] standard shall
Be richeli depeynt with red colour. 548
And so this kniht, this man most marciall,
Shal be conueied lik a conquerour.
And yit for mor encre of his honour,
Vpon ther feet his prisoner es echon, 552
Take bi his manhod, aboute his chaar shal gon,

his prisoners
going on foot at
his side, and
was attended
by musicians
and poets who
sang his praise.

The moste worthi faste bi his side,
Al the remnant aftir on hym lokynge.
Echon the poetes which in the toun abide 556
Shal on hym waite at his hom komyng,
Dites deuise and of his conquest syng;
And streeng menstrallis, to bern also record,
Ther instrumentis shal touchyn of accord, 560

But to abate
his pride
the most
miserable wretch
in all
Rome stood
behind him,

Alle of entent to yiue hym mor corage.
To the Capitoile so he shal be brouht,
And list of pride he falle in non outrage,
Nor surquedie withynne his owne thouht, 564
The moste wrech shal of the toun be souht,
Which of custum shal haue a staf in* honde,
And in the chaar behynde his bak up stonde.

545. of] in H.

546. the] in B, R, J.

556. 1st the] of R, of the J, P.

559. bern] been R.

560. of] at R.

566. in] on B, R, J, P

Gnotos Eolitos in Greek he sholde seyn,
Which in our tunge pleyntli doth expresse,
"Knowe thi-silff," remembryng in certeyn
Vpon Fortunys froward doubilnesse,
On whom to triste may be no sekirnesse.
And who that douteth wher that it be thus,
Lat hym remembre the eende of Manlius.

What auailed his triumphes or his bies?
Crownys of gold & perlid fressh tunycles?
His hih prowesse, or al his cheualries,
Synguler fihytyng or marcial particules,
Newli remembred or rad in old cronicles?
Peise his merites, & see how at the laste,
How into Tibre ther champioun thei caste!

To his excus auailed neueradeel
Fauour of comouns, carectes of his woundis,
Nor to the goddis his lamentable appel,
Nor remembraunce of ther fraunchised boundis,
Teritories, nor wynyng of the groundis,
Which that he wan with spendyng of his blood, —
Al knet in on, to hym no sted thei stood.

Heer may ye see how Fortune sodenli
Cleernesse of fame can chaunge to dirknesse,
Glorie* to reproche, worshepe to velany,
And ioie passid to mortal heuynesse,
Swetnesse of sauour* into bittirnesse,
And sobirnesse into furious rage,
And old fraunchise to thraldam & seruage.

For ther was nouthur request nor praier
That auailed to his delyueraunce.
In cheynys fetrid, dedli of look & cheer,
Abod the sentence of his fynal greuaunce, —
Pale of face, with tremblyng contenaunce,
Whan he, alas, gan mortalli aproche
Of Tarpeia to the hidous roche.

568 saying, "Know
thyself and
remember the
doubleness of
Fortune, in
whom there is
no trust."

572

For what
auailed the
triumphs of
Marcus?

576

580

He was thrown
into the Tiber,
and the favour
of the commons,
his appeal to the
gods, and the
remembrance
of his past
services were as
nothing.

588

Thus can
Fortune
suddenly change
the brightness
of fame to
darkness, and
glory to
reproach.

592

Fettered in
chains, he
awaited his
sentence, and
was led pale
and trembling
to the Tarpeian
Rock.

596

600

568. Gnothy seanton P — sholde] shal H, R 3.

573. douteth] douteh R.

576. &] or H, R 3, H 5, P.

577. prowesse] prow R.

578. particles R, J, P, particlis H, R 3, particules H 5.

579. new H. 589. may ye] men may H. 591. Gloire B, J, R.

593. sauour] fauour B, H, R, R 3, H 5.

594. forious R.

595. hraldam R.

This rock was
named after a
lady called
Tarpeia, who,
guilty of
treason, was
buried under it.

Of Tarpeia this roche bar the name
Aftir a ladi, as maad is mencioun,
Callid Tarpeia, which fill in gret diffame
Because she was assentid to tresoun,
Taue brouht ennyes into Rome toun.
Wherof convict, hir stori is weel knowe,
Vnder that roche she was Idolue lowe.

604

608

And it was
also called
Carmenton,
after Carmentis,
a woman of
great influence,
who built the
Capitol and
invented our
alphabet.

This roche also was callid Carmentoun
Aftir a woman of gret auctorite
Callid Carmentis, which thoruh hir hih renoun
The Capitoile made in that cite.
And she fond lettres first of our A. B. C.,
And kunyng hadde, among hir werkes all,
Declare afforn[e] thyng that sholde befall.

616

Marcus found
neither favour
nor friendship.

And on this harde sturdi roche of ston,
Fro the Capitoile Marcus was cast down.
Othir fauour nor frenshepe fond he non,
For alle his batailes fouhten for the toun.
The comouns hertis wer turnid up-so-down,
Whos loue is lik, preued at assay,
A blase of fyr, now briht & now away.

620

623

The common
people may
make promises,
but when the
need comes they
do not keep
them,

The comoun peep[le] may hote and crie faste, [p. 216]
As ther hertis stedfast were & stable;
But at a neede ther promys wil nat laste,
Of ther corages thei be so remevable.*
To folwe resoun gerissh and vntretable,
Lihtli declynyng, and that is ful gret routhe,
Aftir oppynyouns, & nothyng aftir trouthe.

628

and so
Marcus was
deceived and
left to his fate.

This Manlius was of his trust deceyued,
Whos lust vnleeful departed was on tweyne,
First whan of pride he wolde ha be resceyued
To hih estat, which he myht nat atteyne,
Wherthoruh the senat gan at hym disdeyne,
And the comouns, ay fals at such a neede,
Left hym in myscheeff, & took of hym non heede.

632

636

609. Idolue lowe] I don throwe H.
616. fall H.
627. remevable] remuable B.
631. This] Thus H.

¶ Lenvoye.

IN this tragedie men may beholde & see
 The perelious damages of fals ambicioun,
 Of them that benat content with þer degre,
 But wolde up clymbe, lik ther oppynyoun,
 To hih estat be vsurpacioun, —
 Which nat considre the sentence of scripture,
 In a good mene men lengest may endure.

Who that vsurpeth to hier dignite
 Than apperteneth to his condicioun,
 In roial chaieres for to make his see,
 And hath no titele of lyne nor resoun,
 Thoruh froward pride ful ofte he is put doun;
 For lak he seethnat how eueri creature
 In a good mene lengest may endure.

Whan Dedalus tauhte his sone [to] flee,
 He bad hym first, of hih disgresioun,
 Fro Phebus heete keepe his wynges fre,
 And fro Neptunvs cold congelacioun,
 Menyng herbi, for short conclusioun,
 That who that list with ioie his staat assure,
 In a good mene he lengest shal endure.

Remembre the manhod & magnanymyte
 Of Marcus Manlius, which be presumpcioun
 Wolde haue gouerned Rome the cite,
 Maugre the senat reulid that myhti toun,
 Which turnid aftir to his confusioun,
 For he sauh nat, such was his auenture,
 In a good mene men lengest may endure.

Sume in ther grettest hih prosperite,
 Of froward corage and furious mocion,
 In ther gret wele, bi fals duplicite
 Han a maner straunge condicioun,
 Nat to be content with plente nor foisoun,
 Bi a fals etik, which of ther nature
 In a good mene ne cannot long endure.

But in this erthe grettest felicite
 Is hertis ese, richest pocessioun,

640 This tragedy
tells us of the
peril that lies
in the false
ambition of
those who, not
contented with
their degree,
wish to climb
to higher estate
by usurpation.

644 Such people
are often put
down; they
cannot see that
all creatures
best endure
648 when they live
in a happy
mean.

652 Dædalus told
his son to fly
neither too high
nor too low,

656

660 but Marcus
Manlius,
content with no
moderation,

664

668 was like
many others
who in their
highest
prosperity are
most
dissatisfied.

672

Heart's ease
is the greatest
joy on earth,

652. to] *om.* R, J, H, R 3.

659. &] & the R.

674. richesse H.

With suffisaunce content for to be,
Of worldli trouble teschewe thoccasioun, 676
Meuyng no quarellis, causyng no discencioun,
Nor cleyme nothyng which hard is to recure,
Sithe in good mene men lengest may endure.

and this,
Princes, you
should re-
member; for
the envy of
high climbing
causes only
strife, and no
community is
to be trusted.

Pryncis, remembreth in your most mageste, 680
Envie of clymbyng causith diuisioun.
Beth of accord, trustith* no comounte,
Which, at a poynt, is but decepcioun, 684
And specialli fleeth symulacioun.
Ye may in Marcus seen a pleyn figure,
Which for ambicioun myhte no while endure.

[How Neptanabus kyng of Egipt / was by xerses
constreyned to fle his kyngdam.]¹

Bochas next
began to tell
briefly the story
of Nectanebes,
king of Egypt,

A FFTIR the fall of Marcus Manlius,
Bochas anon gan his stile dresse 688
Breefli to telle of Neptanabus,
Kyng of Egipt, and of his gret richesse,
Seyng afforn[e], in al his noblesse
Bi vnkouth crafft, how he ne myhte chese, 692
That in al haste his crowne he sholde lese.

who foresaw by
astrology that
he should lose
his kingdom.

For he was kunnyng in especial,
And riht expert, as maad is mencioniun, 696
In alle the sciences callid liberal,
And knew afforn bi calculacioun •
How God wolde make a transmygracioun
Of his kyngdam, & pleynli to reporte,
The lond of Perse to Grekis ful transporte. 700

Forced to flee by
Xerxes, he
went to Greece
as a magician

For bi kyng Zerses out of his cuntre,
Maugre his tresor, his cunyng & his miht,
This Neptanabus constreyned was to flee, 704
Durst nat abide to haue of hym a siht.
And into Grece he drouh hym anon riht,
Nat lik a kyng, but aftir old writyngis,
Lik a magicien he wrouhte wonder thynges.

677. quarell H — 2nd no] *om.* H, R 3, H 5, P.

682. trustith] trust on B, R 3, trust in H 5, P.

693. lese] *om.* R.

704. of hym to have H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

Vpon fortune fether to proceede,
 Bi his kunyng he gretli forthered was,
 And bi his sleiht werkyng eek in deede
 He was aqueynted with queen Olympias,
 And so secre, pleynli this the caas,
 That upon hir, men seide be deemyng,
 Gat Alisaundre, the grete myhti kyng.

[p. 217] 708 and there
 became so
 intimate with
 Olympias,
 that men said
 Alexander was
 his son.

712

But how he fledde out of his regioun,
 Of his images nor his illusiouns
 Bochas mak[e]th no maner menciouun,
 Nor how he wrouhte be incantaciouns,
 Nor of his sotil operaciouns,
 Nor how that he, lik a man, be nihte
 Whilom appeered in the queenys sihte.

716 But Bochas
 does not tell
 about either
 his flight or
 his incantations,
 or how he
 appeared like a
 man by night
 to the queen.

720

Sauf of his deth[e], Bochas writ riht nouht,
 Remembryng nouthur the tyme nor the date,
 How Alisaundre and he* togidre han souht
 The cours of sterris toward eue late,
 And how his sone, lik as was his fate,
 Doun from a bregge bi ful mortal wrak
 Cast hym bakward, & so his nekke brak.

724 He wrote only
 of his death,
 and how
 Alexander
 threw him
 off a bridge and
 broke his neck.

728

[How Pausonoy Duk of Lacedemoyne was exiled
 by them of Athenys.]¹

THIS was his ende, & aftir this Bochas
 Gan in al haste his stile [to] auauunce
 Of Pausonyos to tell the pitous caas,
 And al the maner of his woful chaunce.
 Which was a duk, & hadde in goueraunce
 Lacedemoyne, ther foundyng a cite
 Which of old tyme was callid Bisante.

Pausanias, duke
 of Sparta,

732

Thei of Athenys that cite gat with myht
 And it conquered bi ther cheualrie;
 And aftirward, wher it wer wrong or riht,
 Thei exiled the same Pausanye.

736 was exiled by
 the Athenians
 and ended his
 life in poverty
 and sorrow.

716. nor] nor of H. 720. nihte] myht R.

* 724. Alisaundre and he] he and Alisaundre B, R, J, P.

725. euen R.

730. to] om. J, R, H, R 3, H 5, P, tavaunce Add.

731. Pausanyos H, R 3, Pausonoy R, J, Pausonyos H 5, Pausanias P.

736. gat] gret R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

And thus Fortune thoruh hir fals envie
 Caused that duk, withoute mor delaies,
 In sorwe and pouert for to eende his daies.

740

[How Heliarchus the tirant for extorcion and oppres-
 sion, was slayn, by the knight Leonydes.]¹

Because Heli-
 archus troubled
 all Persia with
 his tyranny,

AFFTIR the fal[le] sothli of thes tweyne,
 Iohn Bochar was meued of corage
 For to reherse with al his bisi peyne
 The grete furie & thodious rage
 Of Heliarchus, which bi gret outrage,
 Thoun he nat was famous in cheualrie,
 He noied al Perse with his tirannye.

744

748

Bochas became
 angry and
 resolved to
 write against
 tyrants in
 general,

Wherfor Bochas gan at hym disdeyne,
 Caste he wolde, onli for his sake,
 Touche of tirauntes mo than on or tweyne,
 And bi writyng geyn* hem a werre make.
 And in his hande he gan a penne take,
 Tolde in ordre the pereilous pestilence
 Which thei wrouhte bi mortal violence.

752

756

declaring
 that Fortune
 had good cause
 to shew her
 power against
 them.

First he declareth how Fortune of riht,
 Ageyn tirantis furious & wood,
 Hath ful [good] cause for to shewe hir myht,
 Tappalle ther dignites in which* thei stood, —
 Such as reioysshe for to sheede blood,
 Do nat ellis but laboure & deuise
 To spoille the people in many sondri wise.

760

Heliarchus was
 mortal enemy
 of a city called
 Heraclea, and
 brought the
 entire country
 to mischief

And Heliarchus thoruh his cruelte,
 And his contriyued fals extorsiouns
 Was mortal enmy to a fair cite
 Callid Heracie, & many othir touns.
 And bi [his] extort fals oppressiouns,
 As the deede concluded, at a preeff,
 Al that contre* he brouhte to myscheeff.

764

768

740. hir] his R.

743. falle] fallis H. 745. For] & for H.

753. ageyn B. 759. good] om. J, R, P.

760. which] which that] B, R, J, H 5, P.

760. which] which that] B, R, J, H 5, P.

764. Elearchus P. 767. Heracie] heliarchie H

770. contre] countee B — to] vn to H, H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 88 recto.

Turnyng his grace & fauour to hatreede,
 Merci & pite onto cruelte,
 Fraunchise of peeplis to seruitute & dreede,
 Oppressid ther fredam & ther old liberte.
 And all ther statutis, bi which thei wer maad fre,
 He interrupted of force & nat of riht,
 Which made hym odious in eueri mannys siht.

772 by oppressing
 the people and
 revoking their
 liberties, until
 he was hated
 by everyone.

But to restreyne his grete extorsiouns
 Fortune this while was nat rek[e]les:
 For his horrible abhomynaciouns
 She gan tauale hym, this goddesse merciles,
 Bi a good kniht callid Leonides,
 Which with a felawe born of that contre
 Cast on this tiraunt auengid for to bee.

780 But Fortune
 punished his
 abominable
 conduct
 through a good
 knight,
 Leonides, who
 with a comrade
 took vengeance
 and slew him.

Thei dempte it was an almesse deede,
 To sette ther lond in quiete & in ese,
 Of a tirant the furious blood to sheede,
 His inportable malis for tappese,
 Which to ther cite dede so gret disese.
 And of assent, with ther suerdis keene.
 Thei slouh the tiraunt in ther mortal teene.

788

Of whos deth many a man was fayn, [p. 218]
 And specialli of Heracle the cite,
 Dempte it was meedful that he was so slayn,
 To sette in quiete al a comounte.
 Loo, heer men may the rihtful guerdoun see
 Of tirauntis, which bi ther violence
 Toppresse the péeple ha[ue] no conscience!

792 Many a man
 was glad of his
 death.

796

[How the vicious Denys kyng of Cicile slouh his
 brethre and kynrede, and aftir exiled deied at
 mischeff.]¹

AFFTIR this tiraunt, with a ful heuy cheere
 And contenaunce pitous and lamentable,
 Onto Bochas Denys dede appeere,
 Which in tirannye was most importable,
 Thoruh [al] his land hatful and repreuable.
 But, for al that, he gan myn auctour preie
 Of his maneres sumwhat to write & seie.

800 After this
 tyrant,
 Dionysius,
 tyrant of
 Syracuse,
 appeared:

804

785. elmesse R.
 801. Dionise P.

- but Bochas
would not
take the trouble
to mention his
lineage, because
he was so full
of all vices.
- Bochas list nat rehersen his lynage
Nor make no processe of his genealogie,
Because he was, with al his gret outrage,
Ful of alle vices, pride and lecherie,
Of auarice, of ire and of envie.
In Cecile he heeld his roial see
At Siracusic, a myhti strong cite. 808
- Cursed and
malicious of
nature, he slew
all his relations
that he might
rule alone
undisturbed.
- This Denys was cursed of nature,
Most malicious bothe of thouht & deede;
For, as it is remembrid in scripture,
He slouh his brethre, his cosyns & kynreede, 812
That he allone myhte in pes posseede
Withoute trouble or interupcioun
Of al Cecile the myhti regioun.
- He was
idle, licentious
and a drunkard,
- Among his* vices, Bochas doth specefie,
He gan drawn onto idilnesse,
Folwede his lustis of foul lecherie,
And ofte of custum he fill in dronkenesse,
And thouhte it was most souereyn blissidnesse, 820
Lik as he hadde be maister of Fortune,
To folwe his lustis & ay theryn contune.
- and became
blind and fat,
and with the
help of robbers
and aliens
unjustly slew
nearly all the
inhabitants of
his city.
- He wex riht fat & wonder corciuous,
And his eien gan derken of ther siht, 828
That vnnethe this man most vicious
Ne miht nat weel beholde the daies liht.
And of malis this tiraunt ageyn riht,
With helpe of robbours & of fals foreyns, 832
Slouh of his cite nih al the citeseyns.
- Although it is
unpleasant
to hear or
tell about his
vicious life,
I shall
briefly relate
how he made
his men despoil
a large number
of women of
their garments
in the temple
at Cythera,
- His vicious lyff in ordre to reherse
Wer contagious to the audience;
His extort pillages wrouhte in Grece & Perse, — 836
For to write or telle hem in sentence
Wolde infecte the heir with pestilence.
But I wil breefli remembryn & descryue
The sacrileges which he dede his lyue. 840
- In Venus temple beside Citheroun
A gret[e] noumbre of wommen he leet call,
Ful weel beseyn; and be oppressioun
He made his meyne vnwarli on hem fall. 844

806. his] this R. 816. 2nd his] om. H.

820. his] all B, R, J, P. 826. theryn] ther H.

833. the] his H.

Dispoiled them, so that on and all
Bi his outrage and froward violence,
Thei naked stood echon in his presence.

And whan he sauh ther shap & ther fetures,
And ches such out as wer to his plesaunce,
Robbyng the remnaunt, took from them *per* vestures
And leet hem goon withoutyn ordenaunce.
And for this vnkouth abhomynable chaunce
Ther cite Locrois aros with myhti hond,
For his outrage banshyng hym ther lond.

848 and after he
looked them
over and
chose such as
pleased him,
sent the rest
away naked.

852

Another tyme he dide also soiourne
Withyne the temple, lik as it is told,
Of Iubiter, sone onto Saturne.
Ther beholdyng his reliques manyfold,
Sauh among other a mantel large of gold,
Wherupon whan he caste his look,
That riche iewel onto his eus he took.

856 Once when he
saw in the
temple of
Jupiter a mantle
of gold among
the god's
possessions,

860

And thus he saide, hymselfen to excuse, —
“It was to heuy and to comerous
In somer sesoun that mantel for to vse,
Because it was to large & ponderous.”
And ouermor he aleggid for hym thus:
“Sithe the garnement forgid was of gold,
For wynter sesoun how it was to cold.”

864 he said that it
was too heavy
for summer and
not warm
enough for
winter, and
took it for
himself,

868

And whan he gan away the mantel pulle,
Than riht anon this tiraunt deceyuable
Gaff hym another sengle maad of wolle,
Affermede, sothli it was mor couenable, —
To other sesoun mor meete and agreable,
Concludyng thus: “for somer it was liht,*
And warm for wyntir to were the frosti niht.”

872 leaving in
exchange a
singlet made of
wool, which he
affirmed was
light enough
for summer and
warm for
winter.

Another tyme, this tiraunt eek also, [p. 219]
Which was of herte most auaricious,
Entrid onys the temple of Appollo
And of his sone Esculapius.
And whan this tiraunt fel & contrarious
Beheld Appollo berdles, that was old,
And Esculapius with a berd* of gold,

876 Another time
he saw a
statue of
Apollo with a
smooth chin and
an Esculapius
wearing a
beard of gold;

880

854. banysshying H.

861. vse H.

869. mantel] matil H.

874. liht] to liht B, R, J.

876. R omits to line 2212 inclusive. 882. long berd B, J.

and, saying that
it was strange
that the father
should be
beardless, pulled
away
Æsculapius'
golden beard
and made off
with it.

Quod Denys thanne, "as seemeth onto me,

Heer is a straunge froward conveyence,

884

That the fader berdles sholde be,

The sone berdid stonde in his presence."

Made anon bi sturdi violence

To take away the berd, which in his siht

888

Of most fyn gold shon so cleer & briht.

Wherever he
went he robbed
the temples,
and lived like a
thief,

Thoruh Grece and Perse wher-euer he dede gon,

In al the templis this was his vsaunce:

The statli reliques with many riche ston

892

And massiff tablis of myhti gret substaunce,

To take them alle that wer to his plesaunce.

He spared non; thus lyuyng lik a theef

Til he be vengauce was brouht [vn]to myscheeff. 896

until the
Syracusans had
enough of his
evil habits and
banished him,
and he died
a fugitive.

Syracusany, wher he was crowned kyng,

Alle of assent, ther is no mor to seyne,

For his outragis & vicious lyuyng,

Thei ban[y]shed hym neuer to kome ageyn.

900

And so this tiraunt, vacaunt, wente in veyn

Aboute the world as a fals fugityff;

And so at myscheeff this Denys loste his lyff.

[Lenvoy.]

This tragedy
gives a warning
to all rulers
not to be
pillagers and
tyrants.

THIS tragedie yiueth a warnyng

904

To all[e] tho that haue domynacioun

Ouer the peeple, prince, duk or kyng,

Teschewe rauyne and fals extorsioun.

Bit them considre, how bi thoccasioun

908

Of foul pillage & froward tirannye

This said Denys at myscheeff muste die.

Dionysius slew
indiscriminately
and rejoiced in
robbery and
murder;

First he compassed, falsli imagynyng,

912

To slen the citeseyns of his roial toun,

His brethre, his cosyns, his kynrede nat sparyng,

Brouht al his blood onto destruccioun,

In slaughtre he hadde such delectacioun,

Reioisshyng euere in moordre & robberie,

916

Which caused hym at myscheeff for to die.

884. froward conveyence] disconvenyence H.

905. tho] om. H.

911. This stanza is misplaced next to the last one of the Envoy H

— First he] He also H.

To spoille templis was most his reioysshynge,
 Took al ther tresours to his pocessioun,
 Tablis of gold with stonys fressh shynynge;
 Eek fro the* goddis the reliques he took down
 Wher-euer he rod in any regioun.
 Whos sacrilege & compassed felonie
 Caused hym vnwarli in myscheeff for to die.

sacrilegious, he
 delighted most
 in spoiling
 temples and
 920 the gods of their
 relics.

In Venus temple, be record of writyng,
 He dede a foul froward abusioun,
 Al gentil-women that cam ther to offryng,
 Them he dispoiled, as maad is menciouñ,
 Leet hem go naked, withoute excepcioun.
 For which diffame & gret vngent[e]rie
 He bashed was & dede in myscheeff die.

924

In the temple
 of Venus he
 foully stripped
 gentlewomen
 of their
 clothes and
 928 let them go
 naked. Finally
 he was
 banished, and
 died in mischief.
 Noble Princes,
 remember that
 such behaviour
 932 has no good
 end.

Noble Pryncis, remembreth on this thyng:
 Compassed malis & fals collusioun
 Mut haue euel eende* & come to rek[e]nyng,
 Fraude ay with fraude resceyueth his guerdoun.
 Hath this in mynde, concludyng on resoun,
 That all tirauntis, pleyñli to specesie,
 Hadde heer short lyff or dede at myscheeff die.

936

¶ Thauctour ageyn presumpcious [peple and] Princis
 halding pem-self goddis.

YE folk that been astonid in your auys
 To seen tirauntes þat wer* incorrigible
 Left from ther sees, þat held hemsilf* so wis,
 Thouhte ther poweer was verray inuyncible,
 Thouh tofor God nothyng is impossible;
 Wherfor remembreth, & doth nothyng meruaile,
 With vnwar fallis thouh Fortune hem assaile.

Ye who are
 astonished to
 940 see incorrigible
 tyrants, who
 deemed them-
 selves
 invincible,
 lifted from their
 thrones, should

944

For whan tirauntis been sette on hih[e] stages
 Off dignites, regnyng lik wood leouns,
 Ful harde it is to wresten ther corages
 Outher to tempre ther disposiciouns.
 Worldli felicite so blyndeth ther resouns,

know that
 nothing is
 impossible to
 God.

948

921. the] ther B, J.

934. eende] eendynge B, endynge P.

939. *The omission in the heading is supplied from J, leaf 89 recto.*

940. wer] been B.

941. held hemsilf] hemsilf held B, hem helde J.

As thei to God wer egal of poweer,
And hadde Fortune vnder ther daungeer. 952

One need only
think of
Dionysius.

Record of Denys, that ofte was affraid [p. 220]
Bassaut of Fortune, lik as was his fate,
For vicious lyuyng thre tymes disamaied,
As his stori remembreth of old date. 956

[¶] Next on the ryng now kometh Pollicrate
With oon Victurbius, tirauntis of Itaille,
Regnyng lik wolues toppressen the poraille.

Polycrates and
Victurbius were
tyrants of
Italy, who
reigned like
wolves; and
when such men
believe in their
pride that God
cannot put them
down,

For whan tirauntis in dyuers regiouns 960
Of surquedie cachche an oppynyoun,
That ther estatis & domynaciouns
Sholde euere endure bi long successioun,
As Godde nor Fortune myhte nat putte hem down, 964
But as thei wern in ther estat roiall
This world to reule, to bothe too egall.

and, having lost
all shame and
dread, laugh
at Fortune,

[First] toward God thei ha[ue] lost shame & dreed
Touchynng his guerdouns outhur of ioie or peyne, 968
Indifferent atween trouthe or falsheed, —
Ther lust Iserued; no fors who lauhhe or pleyne.
God is forgetyn; at Fortune thei disdeyne,
As bothe wern recleymed to ther lure, 972
Falsli transcendyng the boundis of mesure.

sometimes God
allows her to
favour them for
a time, as if
she really were
willing to
accomplish their
desires.

For which sumtyme, as bookes specefie,
God list suffre, as maad is mencionn,
That Fortune bi a maner moquerie 976
Fauoureth summe folk, lik ther oppynyoun
Tenhaunce ther poweer bi fals decepcioun,
As she wer set, pleyntli for to scie,
To serue ther lust & durst nat disobeie. 980

[How kyng Pollicrate for extorcion and tiramye
was honged til euery ioynt went from othir.]¹

This was the
case with
Polycrates,
tyrant of
Samos,

RECORD I take on proude Pollicrate,
Tiraunt of Sammois, beside þe se Egge,
Which sore laboured erli & eek late,
Ageyn conscience, of furious cruelte, 984

953. Dionise P. 957. No indication of new ¶ in MSS.

967. First] *om.* J.

971. forgotten P — Fortune] *om.* J.

975. list] list nat H.

982. Samos P.

Tabounde in richesse & for to ha[ue] plente
Of worldli tresours, deemyng that Fortune ay
To his desirs ne durste nat sey nay.

Fortune to hym bi many dyuers signe
Shewed outward gret toknis of plesaunce,
Was to hym eek riht fauourable & benigne
In al hir port bamaner attendaunce,
As she hadde been vnder his obeissaunce
To stuffe his coffres *with* tresours lokked faste,
Of fals entent to mokke hym atte laste.

988 to whom
Fortune shewed
so many
favours that it
appeared almost
as if she were
in his power.

992

Alle worldli richesse his lustis dede obeie;
And whan he fond she was so fauourable,
For a sesoun, as she that list to pleie,
This blynde goddess, vnseur & euere* vnstable,
Set hym so hih[e] up at Famys table,
Of fals entent, in his estat roiall
Whan he sat hiest to make hym haue a fall.

996 And so he
believed. But
when he was
seated highest
at the table of
fame, she
decided to give
him a fall.

1000

For in hymself of pride he gan to deeme
How that he stood most in prosperite
Of them that wered crowne or diadeeme,
Aboue al other in most felicite.
And thus enhaunsed in his roial see,
Thouhte hym egal with goddis in comvne,
Fer from al daunger of Fate or of Fortune.

1004 He thought in
his pride that he
was an equal
of the gods,

1008

And for tatempte of goddis the poweer,
And of Fortune the variaunt doubilnesse,
He took a ryng of gold ful briht & cleer,
Theryn a rubi of excellent richesse,*
Sekyng occasioun of sum newe heuynesse,
Which neuer afforn hadde knowe of no such thyng, —
Into the se anon he cast his ryng,

1012 and to tempt
their power
and the
doubleness of
Fortuna, he
cast a rich ring
into the sea,

Dise[s]peired ageyn [it] to recure,
For he dempte it was an impossible.
But rihte anon fissheres of auenture,
Lik a meruaile verray incredible,
Among the wawes hidous & horrible
Caste in ther nettis, yiff it wolde auaille,
Takyng a fissh, the ryng in his entraille.

1016 not hoping ever
to see it again.
Yet a fish
swallowed it and
soon afterwards
was caught and
presented to
him at a feast,
and his carver
found the ring
in its inside,

1020

998. & euere] euere & B.

999. so hihe up at] hih upon H. 1004. or] of H.

1008. al] al be H — 2nd of] om. J — or] & H.

1012. riches] rednesse B, J.

Which was presented at a solempnite
 To Pollicrate with ful gret reuerence, 1024
 Whan he sat crowned in his most dignite
 At a feeste of famous excellence.
 The fissh vndon anon in his presence,
 Mid thentrailles his keruere fond the ryng 1028
 Of auenture, & took it to the kyng.

which made
 Polycrates
 believe that
 Neptune, not
 daring to offend
 his majesty,
 had restored to
 him his ring.

Which dempte of pride and hih presumpcioun,
 That Neptunvs, god of the salte se,
 Hadde of his ryng maad restitucioun, 1032
 And durste nat offende his mageste.
 Wherupon a fantasie kauht he,
 Nouthen heuenli goddis no[r] Fortune blynde of siht
 Wer bothe vnhardy tatempte ageyn his myht. 1036

But God and
 Fortune were
 aware of his
 presumption and
 threw him down
 when he least
 expected it.

His gret outrage to God was nat vnknowe; [p. 221]
 And his presumpcioun Fortune hath weel espied,
 For which she maad aduersite been[de] hir bowe,
 And of hir wheel the spokes she hath so guyed, 1040
 Wheron he sat most richeli magnified,
 That he vnwarli douz from his hih noblesse
 Was brouht ful lowe in sorwe & wrechchidnesse.

Fortune is
 never more to
 be feared than
 when she is
 most smiling.

In worldly* glorie nothyng is mor to dreede, 1044
 Than whan Fortune is most blandisshyng,
 And that hir flatry is fret with worldli meede,
 Hih on hir wheel to make foolis synge;
 Than of hir nature sorwe she doth [in] brynge, — 1048
 Witnessse of princis, of olde or newe date,
 And record also of proude Pollicrate.

Her temple is
 made of glass,
 not steel, and
 her crystal ice
 is unsafe to
 stand upon.

Sumtyme he sat hih on Fortunys wheel,
 Of prosperite with bemys cleer shynyng, 1052
 Whos temple is maad of glas & nat off steel;
 Hir* cristal yys vnwarli dissoluyng,
 Thouh it be fressh outward in shewyng,
 Vnseur to stonde on, & brotil for tabide, 1056
 Who trusteth most, most likli is to slide.

Orontes, Darius'
 constable, began
 a war on Samos,

This gerissh queen, of cheer & face double,
 Withdrouh hir fauour & began to varie
 Fro Pollicrates, sette hym in sorwe & trouble, 1060
 Wex ageyn hym maliciousli contrarie,

1028. be Entraile H, the entrail R 3.

1040. hir wheel] his queele H.

1044. worldly] wordlis B, J — glorie] ioy P. 1054. Hir] His B.

Causyng Orontes, constable with kyng Darie,
Maugre this tiraunt in his most cruelte,
To gynne a werre on Sammoys his cite.

1064

And whan his glorie was most cleer of liht,
And his noblesse shon hiest atte fulle,
Fortune gan thoruh hir chaungable myht
Of his prosperite the fethris for to pull.
And thanne at erst his corage gan to dull,
And alle his pride vnwarli for tappalle,
Whan he was spoiled of his richessis alle.

and when Poly-
crates' glory
shone brightest,
Fortune began
to pull the
feathers of
1068 his prosperity.

First whan Orontes his contre gan assaill,
This Pollicrate of sodeyn auenture
Outraied was & taken in bataill

1072 He was taken
in battle and
chained in
prison;

Bi a full pereilous mortal disconfiture.
Thus koude Fortune bryngen him* to lure
Thoruh hir vnwar, ougli, fals disdeynes,
Lad into* prisoun & bounde in stronge cheynis.

1076

The peep[le] [that] duelte withynne his regeoun
Reioiss[he]d in herte to seen hym suffre peyne.

1080 and because he
was a tyrant,
his subjects
were glad to
see him suffer.

His tirannye, his fals extorsioun

Caused that thei dede at hym disdeyne;
For of his deth[e] no man list compleyne.

Men thoruh the wor[l]d be glad & ha[ue] plesaunce
To seen a tiraunt brouht onto myschaunce.

1084

Foure thynges his tormentes dede augmente:

Sodeyn departyng from his old richesse,

And that he sauh, ech man in his entente

Of his myscheef ha[ue] so gret gladnesse;

Hanged he was, myn auctour berth witnesse,

And heeng so long in tempest, reyn & thonder,

Til eueri ioynnt from other went assonder.

1088 He lost his
great pos-
sessions and saw
that men
rejoiced at
his fall; and
after that, he
was hanged.

1092

To beestis wilde & foulis* rauynous,

Naked he heeng; such was his auenture:

To alle folk he was so odious,

Had in despiht off euery creature,

At his departyng denied sepulture, —

1096 So odious he
was to all
folk, that they
even denied
him a decent
burial.

1065. liht] siht H.

1068. for] om. H.

1071. richesse H.

1076. fortune koude bryngen hir B, fortune coude bringen him J.

1078. onto B. 1079. that] om. J.

1086. his tormentes] this Tiraunt H.

1093. foulis] folkis B, J.

Guerdoun for tirauntis vengable & rekles,
That kannat suffre the peeples to lyue in pes.

Thus may
tyrants, who
resemble cruel
wolves, find
their reward
in hell with
Polycrates.

Thus may tirauntis excedyn[g] ferr þer boundis 1100
Bi fals outrage, ful weel resembled be
To cruel wolues or to furious houndis,
Fret with an etik of gredi cruelte.
To staunche ther hunger auailleth no plente. 1104
Which for ther surfetis, froward for to reede,
With Pollicrates in helle shal ha[ue] ther meede.

[How the tiraunt Alisaundre/ slouh his philosophre
Calistenes with othir for seyng trouthe.]¹

Bochas next
heard the sad
story of
Callisthenes,
dismembered
for his fidelity,

AMONG alle stories to tell þe pitous caas
Of woful pleyntiffs þat put hemsilf in pres 1108
With weeping eyen, myn auctour Iohn Bochas
Was meued in herte nat to be rek[e]les
To write the falle of Calistenes,
[The] which, alas, as it is remembred, 1112
Was for his trouthe on pecis al dismembred.

and thought
that even a
man with a
heart of stone
would be
moved by it to
tears.

For whan Bochas his story gan aduerte,
He dempte anon in his fantasie,
No man hadde so harde a stonen herte, 1116
That mihte of riht his eyen keepen drie,
To seen the processe of his tormentrie.
Yit gan myn auctour his woful penne proffre
To write the wrong don to this philosophre. 1120

Callisthenes,
virtuous in
youth, devoted
his best years
to philosophy,

This Calistenes, in youthe riht wcel thewed,
His greene age promotid to doctryne,
Bi influence of heuenli fate adewed, 1124
Gretli to proffite in moral disciplyne,
Disposid of nature bi grace, which is dyuyne,
To conquere, as bookis specifice,
The noble surname of philosophie.

at whose
breasts he was
fed, and to
whose milk no
earthly balm
may be
compared.

Of his merites, famous & notable, 1128
Philosophie dede hir besi peyne
To yiue hym souke, because that he was able,
The soote mylk of hir brestis tweyne,
Most precious licour, who myhte therto atteyne: 1132

1100. exceden J.

1111. Calisthenes P.

1112. The] om. J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 90 recto.

For bawme is non, the vertu weel declared,
Of worldli richesse may be therto compared.

This precious pyment is youe vnto no foolis,
Aboue all licours it doth so ferre excell,
Whos origynal sprang in the hooli scoolis
Of Athenys, as famous bookis tell;
For of philosophie ther sprang out first þe well,
Wher Calistenes, the experience is kouth,
With fulsum plente was fostred in his youth.

1136 It is never
given to
dunces, and first
sprang from the
schools of
Athens, where
Callisthenes
was fostered.

Thouh he was bor[en] of a good lynage,
Vertu maad hym mor hih up for tascende,
To been enhaunsed for noblesse of corage
Moor than for blood[e], who can comprehende:
For philisophres & clerkis mor commende
The moral vertues entresoured be writyngis,
Than al the tresours of worldli crowned kynges.

1140
1144 Though born
of good family,
virtue saw that
he ascended
even higher:

Of gentil stokkes rekne out the issues,
That be descendid down from a roial lyne:
Yif þei be vicious & void of al vertues
And ha[ue] no tarage of vertuous disciplyne,
With temporal tresour thouh thei florshe & shyne,
As for a tyme sitting on hih[e] stages,
Withoute vertu thei ar but ded images.

for moral worth
is greater than
descent from
royal line.

For thouh princis ha[ue] conquered be bataille
This world in roundnesse bi ther cheualrie,
What may ther tryumphes or noblesse auaille,
Withoute that vertu be riht ther titles guye,
To be compared vnto philosophie?
For philisophres applie al ther ententis
To knowe heuene & cours of elementis.

1156 Though princes
conquer the
world by battle,
their triumphs
avail little
unless they are
guided by
virtue.
1160

Thei sette no stoor of thynges transitorie,
Nor of Fortunys expert doubilnesse;
To heuenli thynges is set al ther memorie,
How the seuene planetes in ther cours hem dresse,
Meuyng of steris, sparklyng in ther brihtnesse,
With reuoluciouns of the speeris nyne,
Moodres of musik, as auctours determyne.

1164 Philosophers do
not care for
transitory
things, but turn
to the seven
planets, the
mothers of
music.

And in the noble tweyne famous housis
Flouryng in Grece, richest of euerichon,
Cald bi old date the faire trewe spousis

1172 Athens and its
Academy were
the bright
lanterns of the
world.

Of philisophres, many mo than oon,
 In Achademye & in Athenys shon
 The briht lanternis of most reuerencis,
 This world tenlumyne bi liberall sciences. 1176

Callisthenes
 studied in the
 schools of
 Socrates and
 Plato, who held
 the key of
 secret mysteries
 and of the
 divine idea,
 And among other this Calistenes
 Was in his youthe put for to scoleie
 In the too scooles of prudent Socrates
 And of Plato, which that bar the keie 1180
 Of secre mysteries & of dyvyn Ideie.
 In which too scooles of gret habilitie
 Was non profitted halff so moch as he.

and had
 all sciences
 hidden within
 their breasts.
 These olde clerkis, these too philisophres 1184
 Wer in tho daies for doctrine souereyne
 Callid in this world the riche *precious* coffres
 And tresoreris, that kepte the chestis tweyne
 Amyd ther brestis, wheryn God ded ordeyne, 1188
 Most cleer pocessioun put in ther depos,
 Of alle sciences vnder a keye cloos.

He was
 also a pupil of
 Aristotle, who
 chose him to
 attend
 Alexander,
 This Calistenes, scoleer & auditour
 Of Aristotiles, bi kunnyng conqueryng 1192
 The noble *gemme* & the most *precious* flour
 Of philosophie, al flour[e]s surmountyng,
 Wherthoruh he was chose in his lyuyng,
 As his maister list for hym prouide, 1196
 On Alisandre tawaiten & abide.

when Alexander
 asked him to
 send him a
 philosopher to
 magnify his
 conquests by
 good counsel,
 to record his
 triumphs,
 For Alisaundre, of kynges most enteere
 And most worthi, to speke of hih prowesse,
 Dede Aristotiles humbeli requere, 1200
 To prouide & doon his bisynesse
 Bi expert knowyng & auysynesse
 To sende hym oon, which of philosophie
 Mihte bi good counsail his conquest magnefie. 1204

and to direct
 him in moral
 virtue.
 To write also his tryumphes digne of glorie [p. 223]
 And to remembre his actis marciall,
 Put his palmys of knihthod in memorie,
 And to directen in especiall 1208
 His roial noblesse in vertu morall,
 That non errour be sey[c]n heer nor there
 In hym that sholde al the world conquere.

1178. for] forth H, R 3 — scoleys H. 1180. keys H.

1181. Ideies H.

1210. be] wer H. 1211. the] this H.

But it fill so of knihtli auenture,
That of Fortunis hih promocioun,
That he bi armys proudli gan recure
Of Perse and Mede the myhti regioun,
Brouhte kyng Darie onto subieccioun,
Gat hool his tresour, that no man myhte expresse
Tacounte the noumbre of his gret richesse.

1212 But after his
conquest of the
Medes and
Persians,

Which vnseur tresour & slidyng habundaunce,
With wastyng shadwes of godis transitorie,
In surquedous pride gan so his herte auauunce
Bi fals ambicioun & outraious veynglorie,
That made hym lese mynde & eek memorie,
To knowe of nature he was no man mortall,
But lik to goddis that wer celestiall.

1216

1220 Alexander grew
proud, and,
no longer
considering
himself a mortal
man,

Above the palme of old[e] conquerours,
Knihtli tryumphes, conquestis marcial,
He vsurped be tittle of his labours
To heuenli goddis for to been egal.

1224

1228 aspired to be an
equal of the
seven gods of
heaven and
presumed to be
deified.

And thoruh his merites most imperiall,
He gan presume be lyne he was allied
With the seuene goddis for to be deified.

1232

Thoruh al his paleis & his roial halle
A lawe he sette, upon payne of lyff,
That men of custum sholde hym name & calle
This worldis* monarke, nat mortal nor passiff,
Sone to Iubiter for a prerogatyff,
Which hadde the erthe, as god most of puissaunce,
Conquered bi swerd onto his obeissaunce.

1236 He ordained
that men should
call him the
son of Jupiter,

Bi ful auys purposed for the nonys,
Of pompous outrage & surquedous entente,
Ful gret tresor of gold & precious stonis
Vnto the temple of Iubiter he sente,
That the bisshoppis & preestis sholde assente
Hym to resceyue at his hom komyng
Lik as a god, & lik no mortal kyng.

1240 and bribed the
priests to
receive him as
a god.

1244

Thus bextort dreed & bi vsurpid myht
Was first brouht in foul idolatrie,
Causyng pryncis to resceyue ageyn riht
Godli reuerence of froward maumetrie.
But whan Calistenes this errour dede espie

1248 Thus idolatry
originated.
But when
Callisthenes
saw Alexander's
error, he
endeavored to
correct it.

1221. auauunce] enhaunce H, enhance R 3, H 5.

1222. outraious] contagious H.

1236. Thes wordis H — wordlis B. 1246. kyng] thyng H, P.

In Alisaundre, he bisili dide entende 1252
 This fals oppynyoun to correcte & amende.

Five proofs he
 gave him that
 he was only
 a mortal man:

Bi fyue causes, notable to reherse,
 This Calistenes in especial,
 Thouh he was kyng of Egipt, Mede & Perse, 1256
 He preued of resoun he was a man mortall,
 His berthe eek erthli & nat celestially,
 Fader, mooder as of ther natures
 Born for to deie lik other creatures. 1260

His father
 and mother
 were worldly
 folk and in
 no respect
 celestial, and
 both of them
 had died.

His fader Phelipp, of Macedoyne kyng,
 His mooder callid Olympiades,
 Worldli folk & heuenli [in] no thyng,
 With kyngis, queenis upset bi hih encres. 1264
 Yit ageyn deth thei koude ha[ue] no reles,
 Lawes of nature maugre ther will tobeie,
 Nat lik goddis, but onli born to deie.

They were
 subject to
 various passions
 and infirmities,
 and nothing
 deified them
 on earth but
 flattery and
 dread.

Kynde made hem subiect to sundri passiouns 1268
 And many vnkouth dyuers infirmytes,
 Now glad, now heuy of condiciouns,
 Folwyng the fourme of ther humanytes.
 But of ther false vsurpede dietes, 1272
 I can nat seyn, sauff dreed & flat[e]rie
 Wrongli in erthe dede hem deifie.

Alexander
 himself, for all
 his power,
 suffered
 the passions of
 health and
 sickness.

Eek Alisaundre folwyng euere his lust,
 For al his lordshepe & his gret[e] myht, 1276
 He suffred passiouns of hunger & of thrust,
 Now hool, now sik, now heuy and, now liht.
 Whos entrechaungyng in euery mannys siht
 Cleerli shewed, cleerkis reherse kan, 1280
 He was no god, but lik a mortal man.

Once he became
 very ill from
 bathing in the
 Nile when over-
 heated and
 nearly died,

It fill onys, myn auctour doth compile,
 In a gret heete, long or he was old,
 He bathed hymself[e] in the flood of Nile, 1284
 Wher of fortune he sodenli took cold:
 His pooris opnede on parties manyfold,
 Lay long aftir, his story berth witnesse,
 Or he was curid of that gret seeknesse. 1288

and when finally
 he recovered, it
 was through
 medicine and
 not divine
 power.

But at the laste, bi craft of medecyne [p. 224]
 Delyuered he was of that infirmyte,
 Nothyng amendid bi his power dyuyne,
 Bi myht of Iuno nor Iubiteres pouste, 1292

1264. upset bi] set up to H. 1277. 2nd of] oft H.

Nor bi his owne vsurpid deite:
 For bi the passiouns which he dede endure,
 It shewed he was a dedli creature.

Off hym also it is maad menciouⁿ,
 He hadde in custum to falle in dronkenesse,
 Thoruh vinolence loste ofte his resoun;
 Than of ire and furious hastynesse
 He wolde smyte & hurte in his woodnesse.
 Which toknys wern, pleyntli to termyne,
 In his persone nat heuenli nor dyuyne.

Whan the philisophre callid Calistenes
 Gan first considre al thes condiciouns
 In Alisandre, he put hymself in pres,
 Void of dissymulyng or long* dilaciouns,
 For to reffourme such fals ambiciouns
 Of godly honours,* which men dede on hym feyne,¹³⁰⁸
 And from all vices his corage to restreine.

In this purpos as eny centre stable,
 He cast hym fulli of trewe entencioun
 To correcte al that was repreuable
 Vsid in his persone or in his regeoun.
 Trouthe gaff hym herte lik a champioun,
 To telle the kyng in his estat roial,
 He was no god, but as a man mortal.

For which the kyng of indignacioun
 Kauhte a quarel ageyn Calistenes,
 Put upon hym vnjustli fals tresoun,
 Onli to slen his maister causeles.
 And for tateynte hym, affor[n] al the pres
 Saide how he hadde of his iniquite
 Conspired ageyn his roial mageste.

And feyned also, the silue same tyme,
 How he had maad a conspiracioun
 Ageyn his lord, bi an horrible cryme
 Interuptyng the relegioun
 Of his dyuyne institucioun;
 That in such caas, ther was no bettir reed,
 But Calistenes bi lawe mut be ded.

1296 He also had a
 habit of getting
 drunk and
 acting like a
 madman, which
 was hardly a
 proof of
 divinity.

1300

1304 Callisthenes
 told Alexander
 all these things
 without fear or
 dissembling.

1312 Truth gave
 him the heart
 of a champion.

1316

1320 But the king
 became so
 angry, that he
 openly accused
 Callisthenes of
 conspiring to
 slay him,

1324 and also said
 very untruth-
 fully that Callis-
 thenes had
 interfered with
 the religion
 which he had
 divinely
 instituted, and
 therefore
 must die.

1328

1298. vinolence] violence H — ofte] oftene H.

1306. or long] & B.

1308. godly honours] goodli honour B, J, godly honour P.

1316. as] om. H, P, H 5.

1321. for] om. H. 1324. And] om. H.

They hewed off
his hands and
feet and tore out
his eyes

And to prolonge of his deth the peyne,
Vpon a boord he was leid along,
His feet smet of & his hondes tweyne,
His eyen rent out: wer nat his peynes strong?
Thus kan tirauntes, whan them list do wrong,
Slen philisophres withoutyn any routhe,
Which spared nat for to seyn hem trouthe.

1332

1336

and cut off his
lips and nostrils,
and exhibited
his mutilated
body to the
army.

This cruel vengauunce mihte nat suffice;
But Alisaundre, mor tencrece his wo,
Dede kutte his lippis in ful cruel wise,
His nose-thrillis, his eres eek also.
And with the bodi he badde men sholde go
Toforn his host[e], as it is remembrid,
To shewe the trunke, how it was dismembrid.

1340

1344

After that, he
was thrown into
a dark cave
filled with
madly barking
dogs.

In a caue, deep & wonder lowe,
Solitarie, dirked al the boundis,
Aftir the[s] peynes he made hym to be throwe,
The place stuffid with wood berkyng houndis,
Of fals entent to reende his bloodi woundis.
Til Lisymachus, of gret compassioun,
To shorte his torment gaf [to] hym poisoun.

1348

Finally
Lysimachus
compassionately
gave him poison
to shorten his
agony.
Alexander, you
ought to be
ashamed of
yourself!

Who radde euer of tormentis more* terrible!
O Alisaundre, thou ouhtest been ashamed
To slen thi clerk with peynes so horrible,
For thi viciis because he hath the blamyd!
Thi roial name therbi is diffamyd.
But euer tirauntes, whan them list be wood,
Of innocentis reioisshe to sheede [the] blood.

1352

1356

But far from
being ashamed,
he was so
furious with
Lysimachus that
he shut him
up with a fierce
lion.

Ageyn this kniht, gentil Lisymachus,
Because he hadde of hym compassioun,
Kyng Alisaundre was malencolious.
Withoute cause, title or offensioun
Leet shet[e] hym up with a fers leoun,
Void of al helpe for to be socourid,
Of entencioun he sholde be deuoured.

1360

1364

However,
Lysimachus
ran at the lion
like a knight
and rent out
his tongue,
which brave
deed restored
him to
Alexander's
favour.

But Lysymachus quit hym lik a kniht
Ageyn this leoun in the same place.
Ran fersli on hym, & of his marcial myht
Out of his hed his* tunge he dede arace.
Reconciled to the kynges grace,

1368

1331. to] om. H. 1351. to] om. J, P — to hym gaf H.
1352. more] most B. 1362. offensioun] affeccioun H.
1369. his] the B.

Because that he so knihtli hath hym born,
Bettir cherissed than euer he was beforne.

1372

Another kniht, that callid was Clitus,
Famous in armys for his cheualrie,
On the grettest of the kyngis hous,
And most comendid of prudent policie,
Most famyler, as bookis specefie,
Aboute the kyng, as it was ofte preued,
To tempre his corage whan he was agreeved, —

[p. 225] Another knight
named Clytus,
who was a great
friend of the
king,

1376

The kyng & he walkyng hond be hond
Withynne the paleis, beyng in presence
Princis, dukis of many dyuers lond,
Wher thei began be notable elloquence
Remembre of armys the marciall* excellence
Of conquerours & worthi knihtis olde;
And eueri man aboute his tale tolde.

1380 once praised
Phillip so
highly in
Alexander's
presence, that
Alexander, in
his envy,

1384

Among[e] which Clitus, that gentil kniht,
Gan to comende & gretli magnefie
Phelipp Macedoyne, as hym ouhte of riht,
Bothe of [his] wisdam & his cheualrie.
Til Alisaundre hadde therat envie,
Gan disdeyne of furious cruelte
That any sholde be comendid mor than he.

1388

Cauhte occasioun of ire & fals hatreede
Ageyn [t]his kniht, that was to hym most trewe,
With a sharp swerd vnwarli made hym bleede,
His herte blood, hoot & red of hewe,
Bi his sides railyng down of newe, —
Therbi to preue, this stori telle can,
He was no god nor resonable man.

1396 cut him down
with his sword
and killed him,
which proved
that, far from
being a god, he
was not even
a reasonable
man.

1400

Thus in pryncis furious & cruell
Men may cleerli an euidence see,
How ther lordshipe is nat perpetuell,
But ful of chaung & mutabilite:
Of cheer now freendli, now sodeyn enmyte;
Record on Clitus, most in the kyngis grace,
Vnwarli slayn, & dede no trespase.

1404

1372. beforne] ageyn toforne H.

1375. On] oon of H.

1378. as] om. H.

1384. marciall] notable B, J.

1393. That] ban H.

1399. this] his H, R 3.

Alexander, who
slew his friends
in outrageous
fits of anger,
was certainly
not worthy to
be deified.

Was he worthi to be deified, 1408
This Alisandre, most double of his corage?
Or was he worthi to be stelled, 1412
This furious prince for his fel outrage,
That slouh his freendis in his mortal rage?
Thus far[e]n tirauntis whan them list be wood,
To seeke occasioun for to sheede blood.

He who trusts
tyrants shall
soonest be
deceived.

Calisten slayn for moral disciplyne, 1416
And Lysymachus for his compassioun!
Eek this tiraunt of fals gredi raayne
Slouh gentil Clitus ageyn trouthe & resoun,
As ye han herd, for comendacioun
Of kyng Phelipp, this stori weel conceyued, — 1420
Who trusteth tirauntis shal sonnest be deceyued!

Lenvoye.

This tragedy
tells about
Callisthenes,
who was slain
by Alexander

THIS tragedie off Calistenes
Declareth vs be notable remembraunce,
He was with Plato & old Socrates 1424
In his youthe put vnder gouernaunce,
Drank of the mylk bi plenteuous habundaunce
Of ther too scooles, euer deuoid of slouthe,
Last bi Alisaundre dismembrid for his trouthe. 1428

because he said
the truth.

First he was sent bi Aristotiles
For tawaite bi prudent purueyaunce
On Alisandre, list he wer rek[el]les, -
Bi presumpcioun in his roial puissaunce 1432
To take upon hym godly* attendaunce,
Which he withstood; alas, it was gret routhe,
To be so slayn because he seide trouthe!

Those who live
with tyrants
must be able
to flatter and
lie and be
deceitful of
heart.

Who with tirauntis list put hymself in pres, 1436
To haue ther fauour & stormy aqueyntaunce,
He mut kunne* flatre & fage dout[el]les,
Be double of herte, with feyned contenaunce,
With cheer contreued doon his obseruaunce: 1440
For feithful menyng slayn, & þat was routhe,
Is* Calistenes because he seide trouthe.

1433. goodli B, J, goodly R 3, P.

1436. list] om. H.

1438. kunne] kum B, come H, P.

1442. Is] In B.

Noble Pryncis, your subiectis keepe in pes,
 Beth nat to hasty for to do vengauce;
 For to tirauntes that be merciles
 God sent short lyff & sodenli myschaunce.
 Who seith [you] trouthe, hath no displesaunce,
 Preente in your herte, how it was gret routhē
 That Calistenes was slay[e]n for his trouthe.

1444 Noble Princes,
 be not too
 hasty to do
 vengeance, for
 God grants
 short life to
 tyrants.

1448

[How Alisaundre kyng of Pirothe auenturyng to
 passe the flood of Acheronte, there at his bak/
 bi his most trusty was dedly wounded.]¹

AFFTIR the compleynt of Calistenes,
 Slayn tirauntli & dede no trespas,
 Cam Alisaundre kyng of Pirothes,
 His woundis bleedyng, onto Iohn Bochas,
 To hym declaryng* how he drowned was
 In Acheronte, a ryuer of gret fame,
 Beside a toun, Pandosia was the name.

1452 Alexander, king
 of Epirus, next
 appeared before
 Bochas, telling
 him how he
 was drowned
 in the Acheron,

1456

And as it is remembred & Itold
 Of this notable myhti strong cite,
 It was in Grece bilt be daies olde,
 And aftir Pirrus callid Pirothe,
 Wher-as the kyng heeld his roial see.
 And as Bochas also doth* determyne,
 This Alisaundre cam of the same lyne.

[p. 226] near the city
 of Pandosia,
 that was built
 long ago.

1460

Of whos kynreede is maad pleyn mencion,
 Sone to Achilles was this knyht* Pirrus;
 And next in ordre bi successioun,
 Fader to Alisaundre was Neptolomius,
 Which hadde also, myn auctour tellith thus,
 A ful fair douhtir, the story ye may seen,
 Olympiades, of Macedoyne queen.

1464 Pyrrhus was son
 of Achilles; and
 Neoptolemus,
 next in order,
 was the father
 of this
 Alexander and
 of Olympias,
 queen of
 Macedon,

1468

And she was weddid to Phelipp Macedo,
 Whilom mooder, this queen of most renoun,
 To Alisaundre, the stori tellith so,

1472 who married
 Philip and
 became mother
 of Alexander
 the Great.

1446. sodenli] sodeyn J, R 3, H 5, sodeine P. 1447. you] om. J.

1454. declaryng] declared B, J, P.

1460. callid] cam H.

1462. as] om. H, R 3, H 5 — Bochas also doth] bookis also
 B, J, P.

1465. this] the J — knyht] kyng B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 91 verso.

Which al the world brouht in subieccioun.
Whos fader Phelipp, of gret affeccioun,
Leet crowne the brother of Olympiades, 1476
Callid Alisaundre, to regne in Pirothes.

Alexander of
Epirus was
made king by
Philip, who used
him against
nature,

To whom [kyng] Phelipp, for his gret beute,
Because he was so fair a creature,
Hadde such affeccioun & specialte, 1480
As it is remembred in scripture,
Of fals foul lust ageyn[e]s [al] nature,
As seith Bochas, I can hym nat excuse,
Vnleeffulli he dede his beute vse. 1484

which was a
horrible deed,
and too foul to
write about.

And bi mene of that horrible deede,
Which to reherse is to foul a thyng,
This said[e] Phelipp, in Bochas thus I reede, 1488
In Epirothes he made hym to be kyng;
And of extorsioun, be record of writyng,
Causeles fro thens he dede enchace
The kyng Arabba, tho regnyng in that place.

Afterwards
Alexander
invaded Italy,

And it fill aftir, the stori tellith so, 1492
Of this Alisaundre, be cerious rehersaille,
Vpon the deth of Phelipp Macedo,
With a gret host [he] cam into Itaille,
Supposyng gretli for to auaille 1496
To occupie, aftir his proude entent,
Hooli the boundis of al the occident.

where Fortuna
deceived him
by first giving
him victory
over the people
of Lucca.

And thouh so be that Fortune be chaungable,
Double also, bi cours of hir nature, 1500
At his gynnyng he fond hir fauourable:
Made hym twies proudli to recure
Geyn them of Luk, to ther disconfiture
To haue the feeld, & maugre al ther myht 1504
Of verray force to putte hem vnto fliht.

When he began
this war in
Italy,

Ageyn Itaille whan he gan this werre,
Fulli in purpos the Romeyns to assaille, 1508
Of hih presumpcioun proceede he gan so ferre,
With many prince that was in his bataille,
To knowe afforn bi certeyn dyuynaille,
Of his conquest the boundis for to caste,
And of his lyff how longe it sholde laste. 1512

1478. kyng] *om.* J. 1482. al] *om.* P, J.
1488. Epirus P. 1491. Arribba H.
1493. cerious] Curious H. 1495. he] *om.* J, P.
1504. &] *om.* H.

And in the temple of Iubiter the grete,
 Bi dyuynours that wer expert & old,
 Seruyng this god withynne the lond of Creete,
 This was the ansuere which thei haue hym told, 1516
 And it affermyd bi toknis manyfold,
 How that he nat sholde eschewe þe dreedful date
 Ouer the day assigned to his last fate.

he inquired his
 fate of diviners,
 who said that
 he should

And thei also assigned[e] a place,
 Therbi to haue knowlechyng mor cleer,
 Vnder a cite, longe & large of space,
 Callid Pandosia; & for to go mor neer,
 Bi Acheronte, a famous gret ryueer;
 Told hym pleyntli, & koude no ferther seie,
 Of necessite ther he muste [nedis] deie.

1520 die near a city
 called Pandosia,
 on the Acheron.

And thouh it wer an Ernest & no iape,
 Of God ordeyned nat to be set a-side,
 He thouhte of wisdam his destyne tescapē
 And othirwise for hymself provide.
 Cast in Grece no lenger to abide,
 Wenying this ryuer nor that fair cite,
 Sauf in Grece sholde nowher ellis be.

1524

1528 He thought to
 escape his
 destiny by
 leaving Grece,
 where there
 was such a
 town and
 river.

And for to sette hymself in assuraunce
 Of entent tescawe his destyne,
 In-to thre batailes departyng his puissaunce,
 Cam to Itaille tofor Luk the cite.
 Thei with helpe of Sammoys the contre,
 With a gret poweer cam out anon riht,
 Slouh al his knihtis & put hym vnto fliht.

1532

1536 Later on he
 was defeated
 by the Luccans,
 and his knights
 slain; and,

At the bak thei pursued hym so neer,
 That his enmyes almost wer on hym fall,
 Vn-tabregge, broke with the ryuer,
 And ouerturnid with his plankis all.
 And Acheronte men that ryuer call,
 As was told hym bi a certeyn kniht
 Which rood before hym, the ryuer in his siht.

1540

[p. 227¹] closely pursued
 by his
 enemies, he
 came to a
 broken bridge
 over a river;

1544

1516. the] his H.

1518. nat sholde] shuld not R 3, H 3.

1522. large & long H.

1526. ther] þat H — nedis] om. H 5.

1539. out] om. H.

1542. wer almost H.

¹ In B, upper corner of leaf, later hand: "my Fate butt mene | and yett contentt | k k t."

and when a
certain knight
told him that
the river was
the Acheron,
and the
town on its
bank
Pandusia,

For bi a reyn that fill that same niht,
The ryuer wex[e] to a dreedful flood,
And nat fer then[ne]s, in the kyngis siht,
Vpon the water a litil toun ther stood,
Which made the kyng chaunge face & blood; 1548
And speciali his pride gan attame,
Whan he wiste Pandusia was the name.

he remembered
the diuinal
of the priests
and trembled
in every joint
for fear.

And thanne he gan most dreedfulli remembre,
Callyng to mynde the preestis dyuynaille, 1556
Which made hym quake in eueri ioynt & membre
For verray feer[e], & his breth to faille.
No man koude hym wisse* nor counsaile,
On eueri parti he stood so on the wrak: 1560
The flood toforn hym, his enmyes at his* bak.

He did not
know which
way to turn,
with his foes
close behind
him, and the
river before him.

To take the ryuer he stood in mortal dreed;
And yif that he his enmyes dede abide,
He wiste weel that he was but ded, 1564
Passage was non for to turne aside.
Thus desolat he stood withoute guide,
Thouhte it bett to iuparte the ryuer
Than with enmyes that folwed hym so neer. 1568

and finally
choosing the
river as the
lesser evil,

Thre mortal dreedis his herte gan constreyne;
Dreed of the flood[e] for to ha[ue] passage,
Behynde his enmyes, that gan at hym disdeyne,
List he wer slay[e]n in that mortal rage: 1572
His fate approchyng, he but yong of age,
The toun Pandusia the toknys ded expresse,
With Acheronte that bar therof wifnesse.

he was about
to throw
himself into its
waters, when
his most
trusted man
plunged a great
spear into his
back and
killed him.

And whan that he putte in auenture 1576
To passe the flood or ellis to be ded,
Whom he most truste of any creature,
Took a gret spere, squar & sharp the hed,
And at his bak, he quakyng in his dreed, 1580
Traitourli thoruhout[e] plate & maile
Perced his herte; the blood abroad gan raile.

The Luccans
cut his body
into pieces, and
afterwards an
old lady begged
that

And as it is also of hym remembred,
The Lucaynois be vengable violence, 1584
Thei han his careyn on pecis al dismembred, —

1551. water] Riveer H. 1559. hym wisse] wissh hym B,
wisse hym H, R 3. 1561. 2nd his] the B — at his] atte J.
1568. with] with his H. 1569. dreedis] Deedis H.
1578. trustid H. 1581. Trayterously P.
1582. the blood abroad] about þe bloode H, R 3.

Til an old ladi beyng in presence
 Requered them of humble pacience,
 That she of grace gadre myhte anon
 His membris alle & ioyne hem into oon,

1588

Afftir to sende hem onto his suster deere,
 Olympiades, the statli grete queen;
 That of affecciouⁿ & loue most enteere,
 Whan it befell that she dede hem seen,
 Sholde of nature, as it mut needis been,
 Weepe, & prouide in his estat roiall
 To burie the bodi with feeste funerall.

1592

she might
 send what
 remained of
 him to his dear
 sister
 Olympias
 for burial.

1596

Seeth heer exa^mple of this proude kyng
 Which wolde ha scaped his fatal destyne;
 Chaung of placis auailed hym nothyng:
 Parodie of pryncis may nat chaunged be,
 The terme sette, fro which thei may nat flee.
 For whan heuene of deth hath set a date,
 No mortal man eschewe may* his fate.

1600

Thus this
 proud king
 thought to
 avoid his
 destiny; but
 change of places
 auailed him
 nothing, for no
 man can escape
 his fate.

[How Darye kyng of Perce and Mede was outraied
 by Alisaundre kyng of Macedoyne.] ¹

ON Alisaundre callid Epirothes
 Me list as now no lenger for to tarye, —
 Slayn at myscheef, for he was rek[e]les,
 Double of corage, koude chaunge & varie.
 For turne I will my penne to kyng Darie,
 Which that whilom, who-so list take heede,
 Most myhti regned in Perse & Mede.

1604 King Darius III

And among other notable werreious,
 Lik as I deeme, bi heuenli influence,
 Onli be title of his predecessours
 And thoruh his prudent roial excellence,
 To gret encre^s of his magnificence
 He had al Asie, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 Vnder his lordshepe & domynacioun.

1608

had all Asia
 under his
 lordship,

1612

1616

And as myn auctour Bochas doth diffyne,
 He was descendid fro the imperial blood
 Of Artaxerses, & born eek of that lyne.

1620

and, as Bochas
 says, was super-
 latively rich
 and descended
 from the
 imperial line
 of Artaxerxes.

1589. into] in till H. 1595. his] hir H, R 3.
 1603. may eschewe B, J, P. 1604. On] In H, R 3, J.
 1608. to] vn to H, R 3. 1618. Bochas] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 92 verso.

Passed al princis of tresour & of good;
 In Perse & Mede his gret empire stood.
 An hundred prouynces, tencrece his* puissaunce,
 And seuene & thretti he hadde in gouernaunce. 1624

He had power
 over Egypt and
 the Red Sea,
 and deemed
 himself lord
 of all
 earthly wealth.

Ouer al Asie towar[d] the orient [p. 228]
 His lordshipe laste, bookis make mynde,
 And [he] hadde toward thoxident,
 Ouer Egipt poweer, as I fynde, 1628
 The Rede Se was nat left behynde,
 Deemyng hymself, of al erthli treso[u]r,
 Was non but he lord nor gouernour.

His dominions
 extended over
 India, Parthia
 and Armenia,
 and worldly
 folk thought
 him the equal
 of God.

Toward Septemptriou, vnder the mydday speere 1632
 His poweer rauhte & his regalie,
 Ouer Ynde, in cronicles ye may lere,
 And to the boundis of gret Armenye;
 Lord of the kyngdam that callid is Parthie. 1636
 Worldli folk dempte hym with God egall,
 Maister to Fortune, & she nat but his thrall.

But for all his
 wealth and
 ambition,
 Fortune assailed
 him through
 Alexander the
 Great,

But in his hiest exaltacioun
 Of worldli glorie, he coude nat preuaille; 1640
 For al his richesse & veyn ambicioun,
 But Fortune durste hym weel assaille.
 In his most riche roial apparaille,
 Cast in hir chaungis to yiue hym a sharp shour 1644
 Bi Alisaundre, of Grece enheritour.

and cast
 him down from
 his throne.

Vnto purpos I will my penne dresse
 For to declare & make mencion,
 How proud[e] Darie in his most noblesse 1648
 Was bi Fortune from his see cast down.
 For anon aftir the coronacioun
 Of Alisaundre in Macedoyne kyng,
 This was the processe anon of his werkyng: 1652

Alexander made
 no delay, but
 set out at once
 to conquer
 Persia and
 Media,

He nat delaied nor maad no longe date,
 In purpos fulli of ire to proceede
 Off Perse & Mede the scepttris to translate,
 Al ther richessis to conquere & posseede, 1656
 Perpetueli for tabide in deede
 Vndir Grekis myhti obeissaunce,
 In Macedoyne to haue gouernaunce.

1623. his] of B.

1627. he] om. H, R 3, J, P, H 5. 1635. Armonye H

1643. riche] om. H. 1655. sceptre H.

- And as myn auctour weel reherse kan,
 He sette in Grece the myhti strong cite,
 Of Corynthe the metropolitan,
 Ther testablishe his imperial see,
In regalibus whan he list crowned bee,
 As man whom God list of his myht to marke
 The world to conquere, & be therof monarke.
- At the gynnyng of his conquest famous,
 Throuhout Grece in euery regeoun
 First he ches out of his fadres hous
 Knihtis that wern most souereyn of renoun,
 Notable in armys, & of condicioun
 Feithful, trewe, which had of hih prudence
 Forsiht in armys of marcial prouidence.
- To them he dede ful notabli assigne,
 As men expert in knihtli apparailles,
 To make his stuff with many riche signe,
 And forge of steel his plate & his mailles.
 Gaff hem the reule to gouerne his* batailles;
 For prouidence, of yore it hath be told,
 Ful myche auailleth of knihtes wis & old.
- Al this acomplisshe, he list no lenger tarie,
 This worthi kyng, but with his ordenaunce
 Purposed to begynne on kyng Darie.
 And, as it is put in remembraunce,
 In most proud wise he gan hymself auaunce,
 First in his weie to brenne & bete doun
 Of hasti ire Thebes the myhti toun.
- Aftir, he gat too mihti regeouns,
 The ton of Frige, the tothir callid Lide, —
 Set bi old tyme wer ther fundaciouns
 Vpon too ryuers rennyng ther beside,
 Whos goldene grauell ther brihtnesse may nat hide.
 Paceolus & Eryne men them call,
 Richest off stremys, thouth men rekne hem all.

1660 and establishing
his seat in
Corinth

1664

1668 and choosing
out the most
renowned and
loyal knights of
Greece,

1672

1676 gave them full
charge of his
military
preparations.

1680

1684 When all was
ready, he set
out against
Darius, destroy-
ing Thebes on
his way

1688 and conquering
Phrygia and
Lydia.

1691

1667. Atte begynnyng H.

1675. apparaile H.

1676. many a H.

1677. of] þe H — maile H.

1678. his] the B — bataile H.

1683. kyng] om. H, R 3.

1692. grauellis J, grauels P — may] myht H.

1693. Pactolus P.

After win-
ning Isauria and
Pamphilia,

And of his conquest ferther to termyne,
He wan Isaurea, a prouynce wonder strong, 1696
In Asia oon cheuest off the nyne.
And Pamphile, a kyngdam large and long,
He gat also, wher it wer riht or wrong.
For wher that conquest haue any title of riht, 1700
It passeth my resoun, my kunnyng & my myht.

he hastened to
Persia.

I took no parti nor me list nat tarie
In this mateer, but for[th] I wil proceede,
How Alisaundre hastid toward Darie 1704
Tacheue his conquest of Perse & eek of Mede.
But first he cam to Frigia, I reede,
Into a* cite, the name to specefie,
Thilke daies it callid was Gordie. 1708

Arriving at
Gordium in
Phrygia, he
found a rich
cart bound
with ropes in
the temple of
Jupiter;

Aftir myn auctour afferme weel I dar, [p. 229]
Ther was a temple in Frigia, thus seith he,
Of Iubiter, in which ther stood a chaar
With ropis bounde, of stonis & perre;* 1712
Among[es] which men myhte behold & see
A fatal knotte, be craff[t] maad so sotile,
That no man koude ondon it be no wile.

and it was
said that
whoever could
untie the knot
should be
crowned king
over Asia.

For who that hadde science or kunnyng 1716
That corious knotte to losne or vntwyne,
Ouer Asie he sholde be crownid kyng.
And Alisaundre, as bookis determyne,
Seyng this char knet with many [a] lyne, 1720
And how it sempte a maner impossible
To seueren it, which was indyuysible, —

Alexander saw
that the cords
were so inter-
laced that no
man could
loosen them, so
he pulled out
his sword

The chaar with coordis was so enterlacid,
That richeli stood in Iouys tabernacle, 1724
Which be his wit koude nat be vnbracid,
Nother be crafft nor no soleyn myracle:
Til Alisaundre, bi a dyuyn oracle,
Drouh out his suerd, wherof men hadde wonder, 1728
Carf the knotte & cordis alle assonder,

and cut the knot
through, and
rode forth on
his conquest.

Wherbi he wiste that he was ordeyned
Ouer al Asie to be lord & kyng.
Which to reioisshe (this stori is nat feyned) 1732

1698. Pamphilia P. 1699. wer] was H. 1705. to cheve H.
1707. In ta B, J, R 3. 1708. callid] namyd H.
1712. of perre B. 1720. a] om. J, H 5, P.
1729. Carf] korve H. 1730. he] thei H, H 5, R 3.

He rood lik Mars his batailes conueyeng,
 Thoruh Perse & Mede his standardis displaieng,
 Toward his conquest, wher I leue hym duelle,
 And of this chaar & knottes I wil telle.

1736

Prudent Iustinus, an olde cronicler,
 In his cronicles reherseth this storye:
 How [oon] Gordius, a poore laborer,
 Beside the cite that callid is Gordie,
 Eryng his lond dede his oxis guie,
 Al maner foul that hath weengis fliht
 Hih in the hair apperede in his siht.

Justin tells as
 that Gordius, a
 poor agricul-
 turist, once saw
 all manner of
 birds flying
 high in the air.

1740

Vnknowe to hym the tokne what it mente,
 With dyuynour[es] cast hym to counsaile,
 Callid augures, which hooli ther entente,
 Knowyng the processe of such dyuynaille,
 Wher it shal proffite or disauaille.

1744

As he did not
 know what the
 token meant,
 he went to
 Gordium to
 consult the
 augurs, and met
 at the city gate

And at the gate of Gordie the cite
 He mette a maide excellyng of beute,

1748

a beautiful
 girl, who
 had fore-
 knowledge of
 events, and told
 him that he
 was to be
 lord of all
 Asia, and,
 hoping to
 become queen,
 married him.

Which from aboue, bi heuenli influence,
 Hadde of hir birthe a maner know[le]chyng,
 In such augurie gret practik and science, —
 Which to Gordius expowned eueri thyng,
 Saide of Asia he sholde be lord & kyng,
 And regne ther duryng al his lyff.
 In hope wherof she becam his wyff.

1752

1756

After his weddyng he wex fortunat,
 The cronicle can ber me weel record:
 Ther fill in Frige a sodeyn gret debat
 Among the comouns & a mortal discord,
 Knowyng no mene to brynge hem at accord,
 Til ther goddis bi notable prouidence
 Tauht hem a weie tappese ther violence,

After the
 wedding a
 dispute arose in
 Phrygia, and
 the people were
 told that it
 would continue
 until they had
 chosen a king;
 and it was
 shewn to them
 by miracle

1760

1764

How that debat sholde among hem laste
 Vnto the tyme thei hadde chose a kyng.
 And thei gan crie & preye ther goddis faste,
 Bi sum signe or myracle out shewyng,
 To yiue to them a maner knowlechyng,
 That thei myhte, to ther notable encres,
 Chese such on that sholde hem sette in pes.

1768

1733. bataile H.

1738. this] his H.

1758. his] this H.

1739. oon] om. J.

1769. to] om. H.

1746. ther] be H.

- that they must
crown a man
whom they
should meet
riding in a cart
to the temple
of Jupiter.
- Thei hadde answer, tawaite & be weel war, 1772
To sette espies bi besi attendaunce,
On whom thei mette ridyng in a chaar
To Iouis temple to doon his obseruaunce,
And hym resceyue, bi goddis ordenaunce, 1776
Vpon his hed, withoute mor taryng,
To sette a crowne in Frige to regne as kyng.
- This man was
Gordius, who
after he became
king ruled
wisely and set
his people in
peace.
- And Gordius in his chaar ridyng
Toward þe temple, thei on the weye hym mette; 1780
And awaityng ches hym to ther kyng,
And solempneli hom thei dede hym fette;
Vpon his hed a riche crowne thei sette.
And he to them so egal was & meete, 1784
That [he] hem brouhte in reste & in quiete.
- He suggested
that the cart
be given as
an offering to
Jupiter;
- Thus to the crowne Gordius dede atteyne,
Be toknis shewed onto his gret auaill.
And ther discordes & stryues to restreyne, 1788
He to his lieges gaff notabli counsaill,
That thei sholde with roial apparail
[Go] take his char, as he dede hem deuise,
And offre it up in most lowli wise 1792
- and to make
it the more
auspicious,
it was placed
in the temple
before the
goddess Grace.
- In the temple, that was consecrat. [p. 230]
To Iubiter, a ful solempne place.
And mor to make ther offryng fortunat,
Thei sholde it sette, withoute lenger space,* 1796
Tofor the goddesse that was callid Grace,
Which bi myracles ther hertis to appese,
Sett al the peple in quiet & in ese.
- After Alexander
had cut the
knot and seen
all the mysteries
of Gordius' cart,
he grew
presumptuous
- And whan the kyng Alisaundre hadde 1800
Loosnid the knotte, of which I haue you told,
And of the chaar[e] which Gordius ladde,
The secrees seyn & mysteries manyfold,
Worldli presumpcioun gan make his herte bold, 1804
Withoute title of any rihtwisnesse,
The cite Gordie to spoille of his richesse.
- and robbed
Gordium and
all Phrygia up
to Mt. Taurus,
which is also
called
Caucasus.
- And al Frigie he robbed eek also
Vp to the mountayn that callid was Taurus. 1808
The which[e] hill hath famous names too;
For it is also named Caucasus,

1778. to regne in Frige H.

1791. his] this H. 1796. space] date B.

- Wher this prynce most victorious
 Ordeyned first proudli with spere & sheeld 1812
 Ageyn kyng Darie for to holde a feeld.
- Vpon a mounteyn thei togidre mette;
 The marcial pleyn [was] named Horestes, 1816
 And most proudli ther wardis ther thei sette
 Al for the werre & nothyng for the pes.
 Wher Alisandre, in knihthod pereles,
 Al the Persiens batailed in his siht
 On Daries partie put vnto [the] fliht. 1820
- Kyng Alisaundre, shortli to conclude,
 In his most statli roial magnificence,
 Set nat his trust in no gret multitude,
 But in his knihtis, which longe in his *presence* 1824
 Hadde had in armis longe experience,
 Wer weel preued in marcial disciplyne
 Tenhaunce his conquest bi ther prudent doctrine.
- Which in that iourne han hem so weel born, 1828
 That in ther noblesse founde was no lak:
 For sexti thousand of footmen hem befor
 Thei slouh of Perse, & men on hors[e]bak
 Other ten thousand, so mortal was the wrak; 1832
 And fourti thousand, as maad is mencion,
 Wer prisoneres [take] & put to ther raunsoun.
- On Grekis parti, the stori doth weel shewe,
 Macedonoys on Alisandris side, 1836
 In comparisoun wer slay[e]n but a fewe;
 For of footmen & men that dede ride,
 Thoruh the feeldis, that wer so large & wide,
 Ther wer that day in al ther mortal stryues 1840
 Nat ful thre hundred which that lost ther lyues.
- Darie koude non other rescus make,
 Fledde at myscheff in ful gret distresse.
 His wiff, his doughtre lad awei & take; 1844
 His tentis spoiled; his stori berth witenesse.
 Grekis made glad with ful gret richesse,
 His coffres spoiled, he fond no bet socour,
 And he enporisshed of al his hool tresour. 1848

And there he
 fought Darius
 on the Plain of
 Orestes and put
 him to flight.

Alexander
 trusted in
 warlike
 efficiency rather
 than in
 numbers,

and his knights
 slew and
 captured
 thousands of
 Persians.

Less than three
 hundred Greeks
 were slain.

Darius fled in
 distress, his
 wife and
 daughter taken
 captive, his
 tents despoiled
 of all his
 treasure.

1812. proudli] *om.* H.1815. was] *om.* J, P — named] *namy* H — Horestes] *Adrasties* P.1816. wardis] *werker* H. 1820. Daryus H.1824. his] *om.* H.

Taking refuge
in Babylon, he
knew not what
to do,

Whan Darie sauh his dedli auenture,
Ful pitousli in herte he dede mourne,
And anon aftir this disconfiture
To Babilon in haste he gan retourne,
And whil that he dede ther soiourne,
Knowyng no recure to hym that myhte auayle
With Alisaundre to holde mor bataile.

1852

and sent
letters and
rich gifts as a
peace offering
to Alexander,
upon whom
they had no
effect.

Than of purpos to sette hymself in ese
And for talegge his dedli fel greuance,
In his entent kyng Alisaundre to plese,
Cast for to sende hym lettres of plesaunce,
Yiue hym giftes in ful gret habundaunce.
But al the sleihtis which Darius hath wrouht,
Kyng Alisaundre set hem echon at nouht.

1856

1860

Proceeding in
his conquest,
Alexander visited
the temple of
Jupiter in
Libya,

This manli kyng kept his conceit cloos,
List nat shewe what he ment in deede,
But caste fulli aftir his purpos
Vpon his conquest ferther to proceede.
Aftir the getyng of Perse & eek of Mede
To wynne Surrie, Egipt & Libie-lond,
Deemyng Fortune reedi to his hond.

1864

1868

and said that he
was descended
from the god,

And of his conquest ferther to endite,
Whan his glorie gan most fresshli shyne,
The temple of Iubiter cast hym to vesite,
Which stood in Libie, auctours determyne.
Saide how he was descendid fro the lyne
Of thilke god, bor[c]n to been his hair,
As lord of heuene, fir, water, erthe & hair.

1872

1876

and bribed the
priests to
deify him,
forgetting that
he was but a
mortal man.

And that the preestis fulli sholde assente
With heuenli goddis to maken hym egall,
Gret richesse & tresour he hem sente:
Thus dreed and mede made hym celestiall.
Falsli forgete* that he was mortall,
And of ambicioun, be marcial apparaille,
Cast with Darie ageyn to ha[ue] bataille.

[p. 231]

1880

1857. talegge] tabrige H, ta legge J, talegge H 5, R 3,
taledge P.

1868. Siria P — lyby & Egipt londe H.

1869. of Fortune H.

1876. fir water] watir fyer H — &] om. J, H, R 3, H 5, P.

1881. forgat B, J, R 3.

1882. marcial] mortall H.

And, as I fynde, how thei dede mete,
 The[s] too pryncis *with* peeple innumerable
 In the confrount of the lond of Crete;
 And kyng Darye of folkes deffensable
 Brouht into feeld a peeple incomparable,
 Foure hundred thousand of fotmen fet fro ferre,
 With Alisaundre that day* to holde werre.

1884 In the mean-
 time Darius
 collected a great
 army and met
 Alexander on
 the boundaries
 of Crete,

1888

An hundred thousand ther cam with hym also,
 On hors[e]bak in steel[e] armyd briht.
 And alle this peeple, whan thei hadde ado,
 Al-be that day ful longe laste the fiht,
 Wer slayn & take & Iput to fliht.
 Wher Alisaundre to his ences of glorie
 Hadde of kyng Darie that day the victorie.

1892 but again
 Alexander
 was victorious.

1896

And Persiens to ther fynal myscheeff,
 Withoute merci or payeng of raunsoun,
 With kyng Darie wer put to gret repreeff,
 Void of al hope & consolacioun,
 Fledde, as I fynde, into the regeoun
 Callid Partie, wher, as it is told,
 He of that peeple was take & put in hold.

1900 The Persians
 fled into
 Parthia, where
 Darius was
 captured

1904

And thouh his feteres wern of gold maad riche,
 He hadde therof, God wot, no plesaunce.
 Fortunys giffis be nat ay iliche,
 In hir fals wheel ther is such variaunce.
 Dyuers of cheer, straunge of hir contenaunce,
 Made Alisaundre with a litil noumbre
 The multitude of Darie to encoumbre.

and fettered
 with gold.

1908

Withyne a toun [called] Tharsa he was take,
 In [a] chariet, with cheynis stronge bounde,
 Of al his freendis pitousli forsake,
 Lad & thoruh percid *with* many mortal wounde.
 And this moordre contryued was and founde
 Bi oon Bessus, a froward rekles knyht,
 Which stood afforn most forthred in his siht,

1912 Forsaken by
 his friends, he
 was murdered
 by a froward
 knight called
 Bessus,

1916

1888. be felde H.

1890. that day] for B, J, P.

1893. this] his H.

1903. Parthye H.

1910. Alisaundre] of Alisaundre H.

1912. called] om. H, J, R 3, H 5 — Tharsa Tanca P.

1913. a] om. J, P — I bounde J, ybounde P. 1915. many a H.

- who had sworn to be loyal to him. Yet before he died, Darius sent an old knight to Alexander, requesting him to have mercy on his wife and children,
- And was assured be feith of his legiaunce
 To kyng Darie to be trewe in deede. 1920
 But this fals traitour (God sende hym a myschaunce!)
 Caused his woundis mortalli to bleede.
 Yit or he deied he sente in al his dreede
 A Percien kniht, sad & off gret age, 1924
 To Alisaundre to telle hym his massage:
 "Go thanke that prince of his hih noblesse,
 Which of* his grace & merci most habounde,
 Hym list to shewe so gret gentillesse 1928
 Vnto my wiff & childre, as it is founde.
 For which to hym I am so moche bounde,
 That he myn enmy, of his benignite,
 In ther distresse list haue of them pite. 1932
- and to condescend to have him buried as a king,
- And sithe I see that needis I mut deie
 Thoruh bloodi woundis, which I may nat recure,
 Sei Alisaundre, of grace that I preie,
 For to ha[ue] routhe on* myn auenture, 1936
 Next to ordeyne for my sepulture,
 And condescende to graunte myn axyng,
 For to be buried as longeth to* a kyng.
 Prai yng the goddis which been inmortall, 1940
 Whan he hath do to quiten hym his meede,
 That of his merci most imperiall
 Hym list of grace for to taken heede,
 To burie me, kyng of Perse & Mede; 1944
 For yif this fauour be in his herte founde,
 To his noblesse the fame shal ay rebounde.
- and to avenge his foul murder.
- Requeryng hym of his imperial myht
 Of myn foul moordre to seen ech circumstaunce; 1948
 For moordre alway calleth to God of riht,
 Neuer cesyng, but bi contynuaunce,
 Vp to the heuene to crie for vengauce, —
 Namli on moordre compassed & forthouht, 1952
 Which bi auisement is execut & wrouht.
- After he had given this message to the knight, he died;
- And sithe I haue leid on the this bond,
 To Alisaundre to do my massage,
 And hym coniured heer *with* my riht hond 1956
 Tauenge my deth, wrouht bi gret outrage,

1921. sende] sent H. 1927. of] to B.
 1936. on] of B. 1939. to] onto B. 1940. Immortall H.
 1952. Namli] Namely whan H.

My blood out shad, *with* pale & ded visage,
 Heer bounde in stokkis, to goddis most benigne
 With riht hool herte my sperit I resigne."

1960

Thus he lay stark, [for] ther was lefft no blood,[p.232] and Alexander
 Lik as a-nother mortal creature. buried him
 with kingly
 honours.

Whan Alisaundre the moordre vndirstood,

As ye han herd remembrid be scripture,

1964

He dede ordeyne for his sepulture

The funeral feeste holde in al[le] thynges

As bi old tyme longed onto kynges.

¶ Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie pitous for to heere
 Sheweth of Fortune þe chaunges lamentable,
 Of roial tronis of gold & stonis cleere,
 In worldli princis how thei be euer vnstable.
 Hir* fatal wheel most dyuers & chaungable,
 With vnwar turn list nat hir cours to tarie
 To throwe hem doun; record upon kyng Darie.

1968

This piteous
 tragedy shews
 the lamentable
 changes of
 Fortuna and
 the instability
 of worldly
 princes.

1972

Who can or may be ful assured heere

To make Fortune to be so trefable,

1976

No one on earth
 can be certain
 of Fortuna.

To fynde a weie or serche out the maneere

Bi obligacioun to fynde hir vnmutable?

Hir double face, the world ay deceyuable,

Shewe us ech day how falsli thei can varie

1980

Bi couert fraude; record upon kyng Darie.

Exaample how Phebus *with* his bemys cleer

Sheweth sum morwe his liht most agreable,

But longe or eue dirknesse ther doth appeere

1984

Thoruh cloudi reynes & mystes long durable,

To us declaryng be toknes ful notable,

Worldli dignites, now fressh & now contrarie,

Can chaunge ther tides; record [up]on kyng Darie. 1988

Like Phoebus,
 who often
 shews his clear
 beams in the
 morning and
 is clouded
 before night,
 so are the
 dignities of
 this world now
 flourishing and
 now contrary.

Thoruh all Asie, Perse, & Mede ifeere

His lordshipe last, a thyng incomparable.

To Ethiopie vnder the mydday speere,

Ful of tresour with gold innumerable,

1992

His boundis rauhte; Fortune eek seruisable

Darius ruled
 all Asia, his
 possessions
 were without
 number, until
 Fortune proved
 her might on
 him.

1970. tronis] throwis H.

1972. Hir] Ther B, J, R 3, H, H 5, Their P.

1975. heere] ay heer H.

1988. Can chaunge ther tides] By covert fraude H.

1992. tresour] all tresour H.

Tobeie his lustis, til she gan falsli varie,
Bi expert fraude to preue hir myht in Darie.

Noble Princes,
though you sit
on high thrones,
remember that
no lordship
on earth is
lasting.

Noble Princis, with hool hert & enteer 1996
Lefft up your corages, holdeth this no fable:
Thouh ye sit hih, conceyueth with good cheer
No worldli lordshipe in erthe is perdurable;
And sithe ye been of nature resonable, 2000
Among remembreth, as thyng most necessarie,
Al stant on chaung; record upon kyng Darie.

[Here Bochas remembreth the batailes and losse of
Rewmys of antiquyte/ with the fallyng of diuers
nobles.]¹

Bochas here
reminds us of
the great
sorrows, the loss
of realms, and
the blood
vainly shed in
wars since the
days of the
Greeks and
Trojans.

HEEER gynneth Bochas remembre in certeyn
The grete sorwes, the mortal disauailes, 2004
The losse of reumys, þe blood eek shad in veyn,
Begunne of werris & marcial apparailles.
Cald to mynde of olde the fell batailles
Gunne of antiquite, as maad is mencion, 2008
First atween Greekis & them of Troie toun.

It would make
a compassionate
heart bleed
to have all in
memory.

A pitous herte it wolde make bleede
To haue in memoire the dreedful gret outrage,
As ye han herd[e], wrouht in Perse and Mede 2012
Atween Darie and Alisaundre in ther age.
Eek atween Romeyns & them of Cartage
The woful troublis of werris first begunne,
Cause al the myscheuys that been vnder sonne. 2016

Kingdoms have
been brought to
ruin and laid
desolate by
dissension,

On outhert parti, who can remembre ariht,
Now losse, now lucre komth of dyuisioun,
Now disencres, now heuy & now liht,
Now lyff, now deth, for short conclusioun; 2020
For Bochas seith, such fals discencioun
Hath many kyngdam, that stood in good estat,
Turnid to ruyn & maad them desolat.

Troy and many
a strong city
in Grece and
Persia, Rome
and Carthage
destroyed by
the cruel rage
of Mars.

Remembre of Troye the wallis broke down, 2024
In Grece destroyed many strong cite,
In Perse & Mede gret desolacioun,
Rome dispurueied of marcial surete,
Castellis, tours of old antiquite 2028

2001. necessarie] transitory H.

2004, 6, 7. disavaile, appaile, batailis H. 2011. memorye H.

2015. troublis] trouble H.

2017. ariht] riht H. 2024. of] on H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 94 verso.

Maad ruynous in Affrik & Cartage,
Caused be werris & Martis cruel rage.

Who list considren, wrouht bi daies olde
The cours of conquest of thes werreiours,
In Alisaundre he cleerli may beholde
Bi remembraunce of his progenitours
And of his blood, how al the successours
Hadde fatalli, or thei dede hen[ne]s wende,
A sodeyn deth or a shamful eende.

2032 Think of
Alexander,
his progenitors
and his
successors, how
all came to a
sudden or
shameful death.

2036

Ful many reknid that wer of hys lynage
For to succede in his pocessiouns,
To sexe & thretti partyng his heritage,
To ech assigned ther roial porciouns.
[And] first, as he made his dyuisiouns,
He gaf of Frige the prefecture off riht
To Leonatus, that was so good a kniht.

2040 His estate was
divided
amongst
thirty-six heirs.
Phrygia fell to
the share of
Leonnatus,

2044

But litil* while last his pocessioun;
For the contres list hym nat obeie.
Thei of Athenys hadde indignacioun
With Antipater, for he dede hem werreye;
Yit in that werre, pleyntli for to seie,
Leostenes ther duk, ther gouernour
Was slayn that day; he fond no bet socour.

[p. 233] but he soon lost
his kingdom,

2048

And Leonatus, that was his aduersarie,
Of Antipater the parti to susteene,
Fond Fortune that day to hym contrarie;
For in the feeld thowh he rod armed cleene,
With a sharp spere his wound was maad[e] greene, 2056
At myscheef slayn, myn auctour doth compile.
Thus his lordship last nat but a while.

2052 and died
fighting against
the Athenians.

Antipater, another successour
Of Alisaundre, as maad is menciou[n],
Was be record the* same fals traitour
That for his deth[e] tempred the poisoun.
His sone Cassander acomplisshed the tresoun,
Bar the cuppe which that made hym sterue, 2064
With that strong venym whan he dede hym serue.

2060 Antipater,
another heir,
was the traitor
who mixed the
poison for
Alexander.

2032. thes] be H.

2037. or] or els H, or ellys H 5. 2038. wer] was H.

2042. And] om. J.

2045. litil] a litil B, J, P. 2061. the] of the B, J.

He desired to
slay all who
might be
suspicious of
his treason.

Antipater, of this crym coupable,
Gretli desired in his oppenioun
Vpon al tho [for] to be vengable,
That likli wern tesprien his tresoun.
Drad hym sore, hauyng suspeciou
List he wer accusid to the statis
Of crym callid *Illese magestatis*.

2068

2072

His son
presented the
fatal cup to
Alexander, and
yet Alexander
had made him
prefect of
Caria.

His sone assentid to that horrible deede,
Which to Alisaundre, beyng in Babiloun,
Most traitourli, withoute shame or dreede,
As ye han herd, presentid the poisoun.
And yit the kyng, as maad is menciou,
Thouh he to hym fals was & contrarie,
He made hym prefect, lord of the lond of Carie.

2076

There were
many notable
warriors among
the heirs:
some slew one
another in
battle;

And among other notable werreious,
Ther wer thre mo, ful worthi & famous,
Set in the noubre of his enheritours,
Policarpus & Neptolonius.
And ech of them to other envious,
Withynne a feeld, the stori doth us lere,
Euerich slouh other as thei mette ifeere.

2080

2084

Perdiccas,
perhaps
the best knight
of all, was
given Macedonia
when Alexander
lay dying;

Of Perdiccas* what sholde I write or seyn? —
Which amonge alle was oon the beste kniht,
That whan Alisaundre lay deieng in certeyn,
And gan to feeble of his force & myht,
Dempte afforn that it sat weel of riht,
How this Perdiccas, for wisdom & manheede,
In Macedoyne sholde aftir hym succede.
And onto hym with cheer & look benigne,
Vpon his hed for seeknesse compleynyng,
With ful hool herte for a notable signe,
Of successioun he gaff to hym a ryng,
Aftir his day to be crowned kyng
Of Macedoyne, sithe he myhte most* auaile,
Thoruh al his empire to haue the gouernaile.

2088

2092

2096

2100

and yet, although
he surpassed all
his comrades
in prudence
and strength,
vicious pride so
turned his head,

And yit seith Bochas breeffli in sentence,
Thouh he of knihthod & [of] hih prowessse,
Of manli force & also of prudence
Passed al other, the stori berth witnesse,

2104

2068. for to] that J.

2080. notable] nat al H. 2087. Predicas B.

2099. most myhte B.

2102. 2nd of] om. P.

Bi vicious pride & froward boistousnesse
He was mor hyndred, thoruh his owne outrage,
Than al his enmyes myhte doon to hym damage.

For thoruh his pride & gret extorsiouns,
Fro Macedoyne the peple of that contre
Fledde into other straunge regeouns.
And of presumpcioun, the stori seith, how he
Began a werre ageyn kyng Tholome,
Wher he was slayn in alle mennys sihtis,
Nat of his enmyes but of his owne knihtis.

2108 that
he drove all
his people
away through
his extortions,
and, pre-
sumptuously
beginning a war
against
2112 Ptolemy, was
slain by his
own knights.

Eek Anaxarchus of Capadoce kyng,
Which provynce ioyneth to Surrie,
Touchyng the boundis, be record of writyng,
Toward thorient the lond of Armenye,
Hauyng too contres, Scilice & Ysaurie
Toward Cipre, & a gret ryueer
Rennyng amyddes with stremes fressh & cleer.

Ariarathes, king
of Cappadocia,
2116

This Anaxarchus, wher he was loth or fayn,
In daies fewe hath his kyngdam lorn;
For bi Perdiccas* proudli he was slayn,
Off whom that I haue you told beforn.
Thus worldli princis, thouh thei hadde it sworn,
For al ther lordshipe & domynacioun,
Bi fraude of Fortune vnwarli be put down.

lost his kingdom
in a few days,
for he was
slain by
2124 Perdiccas.

Amongis othir princis of that age,
Vpon Alisaundre duely abidyng,
Bochas reherseth, Amulchar of Cartage,
Duk of that cite, bi record of writyng,
Aftir the deth[e] of that worthi kyng,
As ye han herd, Imoordred be poisoun,
This saide Amulchar, reparyng to his toun.

[p. 234] Hamilcar, duke
of Carthage,
one of
Alexander's
captains,
2132

Was slayn in Cartage, shortli to conclude,
Of cruel malis & conspiracioun
Withyne that cite, of fals ingratitude,
Whan he of knighthod fraunchised had the* toun,—
And natwithstandyng al his hih renoun,
Whan he stood hiest in his felicite,
He bi the comouns was slayn of that cite.

2136 was slain by the
commons of his
city.

2110. regeouns] naciouns H.

2115. Anaxarchus] of Ariarathes P. 2118. lond] lorde H.

2122. Ariarathes P. 2124. Predicas B.

2126. worldli] worthy H.

2134. be] with H. 2139. the] that B.

[How Eumenides was twies outraied by Antigonus/
and atte last / deied in prisoun.]¹

After Alexander
had completed
his conquests,
he claimed that
he was son and
heir of Jupiter,

WHAN Alisaundre in his roial estat 2143
Hadde al conquered, toform as ye ha[ue] herd,
He lik a god, most pompous & elat,
As souereyn prince of al this myddelerd,
To take upon hym was nothyng afferd
To cleyme in contres, a thyng that was nat fair, 2148
Of Iubiter to be bothe sone & hair.

and this was
one of the chief
causes of
idolatrie.

On of the prynciples, who-so taketh heede,
That first brouht in fals ydolatrie,
Was thilke tyme that preestis for fals drede 2152
His name with goddis gan to magnesie,
And so to calle hym of feyned flaterie.
And myd ther temples in Libie on a stage
Of his liknesse thei sette up an image. 2156

It availed him
nothing, for he
died of poison.

But lite or nouht to hym it mihte auaille
Ageyn his deth[e] for to doon socour,
Whan the fell poisoun dede his herte* assaille, 2160
Which made hym fade as doth a somer flour.
Of whos empire was non enheritour,
Sauf in his deiyng, thus stood the woful caas,
Tween sexe & thretti his lond deuided was.

Before his
death he lay
on a couch of
gold and named
his successors.

And in his story ful pley[n]li it is told, 2164
This departis[i]oun, to make it ferme & stable,
He was leid foorth upon a couch of gold,
To reherse be toknis ful notable
Whom he dempte of verray soth most hable 2168
Of al his princis, pley[n]li to discerne,
Whan he wer ded his kyngdam to gouerne.

The first among
them was
Eumenes, and
to him
Alexander gave
Cappadocia and
Paphlagonia.

First ther was oon amongis al that pres, 2172
Next Alisandre the knihtliet[e] man,
The worthi duc* callid Eumenydes,
Whos hih renoun ful weel reherse can
Prudent Iustinus, the grete historian.
Ordeyned afforn to gouerne reumys too, 2176
Al Capadoce & Pafflogonie also.

2155. myddes H.

2159. his herte dede B, J, P. 2171. that] be H.

2173. duc] knyht B, J, knight P — Eumenes P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 95 recto.

His hih noblesse, as maad is mencioun,
 In especial mor to magnefie,
 Hym lakked nouht of comendacioun
 That appartened onto cheualrie,
 To hih prudence or noble policie,
 Except thre thyngis, myn auctour seiþ the same,
 A crowne, a sceptre & a kynges name.

He was a
 knightly man,
 and until that
 time had lacked
 2180 only a crown,
 a sceptre and
 the name of
 king.

But for that he al othir dede excell
 Bothe of prudence & famous cheualrie,
 It is remembrid, as summe bookis tell,
 That ther wer summe [that] hadde therat envie; 2188
 For whan Fortune list to sette up hie
 Any persone alofft upon hir wheel,
 Summe ar beside that like it neueradeel.

2184 Since he
 excelled all
 men in
 chivalry, some
 envied him,

Who halt hym euer upon hih mounteyns
 Fynt gret experience of blastis & of shours,
 Offt is troubled with storm & wyndi reyns;
 So of Alisaundre the proude successours,
 Whan thei sat hiest shynyng in ther flours,
 Wynd of envie, Fortune heeld so the rother,
 That ech was besi to destroien othir.

2192 and as most
 people who live
 on high
 mountains are
 exposed to
 winds and
 storms, so it
 was with the
 successors of
 2196 Alexander: each
 did his best to
 destroy the
 others.

On hillis hih it is an impossible
 A man tabide withoute wynd or reyn;
 A thyng expert & verra[il]ly visible,
 Hih clymbyng up is medlid with disdeyn:
 Pres hath envie, as it is ofte seyn,
 And thoruh preferryng of Fortune in estatys
 Is euer caused gret werre & gret debatis.

2200

This same thyng was weel expert & preevid
 Among thes saide roial enheritours
 Of Alisandre; for ech of hem was greeuid
 To seen his felawe regnen in his flours.
 And thus atween these myhti successours,
 Of fals envie ther gan so gret a striff,
 That ech made other for to lese his lyff.

Not one of
 them could bear
 to see his
 fellow reign in
 2208 peace.

And as it is afforn maad mencioun,
 Policarpus & Neptolonius
 Bi a maner fals conspiracioun
 Ageyn Eumenides wer inli envious.

2212
 [p. 235] Polyperchon and
 Neoptolemus
 conspired
 against
 Eumenes, who
 slew them both
 2216 in battle;

2188. that] *om.* J. 2199. hillis] *hihtis* H.

2201. verrailly] *verray* J, P. 2203. offten H.

2213. R *begins again*.

2214] Poliperchon and Neptolemus P. 2216. Eumenes P.

- Of whos falsnesse he was suspitious,
 Til on a day, ther is no mor to seyne,
 Meetyng in bataille he slouh hem bothe tweyne.
- and this angered
 Antigonus,
 prefect of
 Macedon, so
 greatly
- For which[e] slauhtre proude Antigonus, 2220
 Of Macedoyne prefect & gouernour,
 Wex in his herte so fel & despitous —
 And was with-al a noble werreieur —
 With his knihtis dede hooli his labour 2224
 Ageyn Eumenides bi marcial apparaille,
 A feeld assigned, to holde a gret bataille.
- that he set
 out against
 Eumenes and
 forced him
 to take refuge
 in a castle,
- Made upon hym a proud disconfiture 2228
 As thei metten armed briht in steel,
 And thus Eumenides, of mortal auture,
 Fledde at myscheeff into a strong castel,
 Wherof his knihtis liked nothyng weel;
 For as the stori pleynli maketh mynde, 2232
 That day he fledde & lefft his men behynde.
- where he stood
 destitute, and
 finally fled to
 Argyria,
- In which castel for he stood destitut,
 Fro thens he caste in al haste to flee;
 In his gret myscheeff to fynde sum refut 2236
 That tyme he drouh hym in-tastrong contre
 Sum socour gete auengid for to be,
 Callid Argire bi Greekis of entent,
 The Latyn corupt of this woord Argent. 2240
- a country rich in
 silver, and after
 which the
 Argyraspides
 were named,
- Of Archiraspedes, a peeple that ther duelle,
 Ther name thei took afftir that regeoun.
 The which[e] lond, as olde bookes telle,
 Hath of siluer plente & foisoun; 2244
 For which[e] cause, bi old descripcioun,
 It took his name of nature & of riht,
 Because the soil lik syluer shyneth briht.
- a manly and
 prudent people,
 who had been
 of great help
 to Alexander.
- And of this ile, which hath so gret a pris, 2248
 As myn auctour maketh rehersaile,
 How the peeple be prouident & wis,
 Prudent in armys & manli in bataille,
 Bothe to diffende & proudli to assaille. 2252
 Which bi ther wisdam & circumspect counsail
 To kyng Alisaundre stood in gret auail.

2217. whos] was R. 2225. bi] with H — Eumenes P.

2227. upon] on R. 2228. briht armed R.

2230. into a] in ta H. 2232. makith playnly H.

2238. Sum] So R — gete] to get R, to gete H, J, to gett R 3, to
 geat P. 2241. Argiraspides P.

And Eumenides, oon of his successours,
 As ye han herd[e], drouh to that contre,
 Ther to fynde refut & socours
 In his myscheeff & gret aduersite.
 And with his woordes of gret auctorite,
 His noble langage & his fair eloquence,
 The peple had hym in ful gret reuerence.

2256 There Eumenes
 was well
 received,

And for thei wern manli & coraious,
 Able tassemble bothe in plate & maile,
 He made hem rise ageyn Antigonus,
 Bi ther prowesse with hym to ha[ue] bataille.
 But of fortune his parti gan to faille,
 Wher thilke peple, the stori tellith thus,
 Hadde euer afforn[e] been victorious.

2264 and persuaded
 the peple to
 aid him against
 Antigonus; but
 unfortu-
 nately the
 Argyraspides
 were defeated
 for the first
 time in their
 history, and
 2268 robbed of their
 possessions,

Antigonus hath the feeld recurid,
 That day his knihtis fauht lik wood leouns,
 In furious teene, of corage assurid,
 Brak ther tentis & ther paelouns,
 Spoilled ther castellis, robbed ther dongouns, —
 Wher that contre, vnwarli thus affraied,
 Hadde neuer afforn in bataile been outraied.

2272

And of despiht this peepel rek[e]lles,
 Cauht in ther herte gret indignacioun
 Ageyn ther prince, this said Eumenydes,
 Which hadde hem brouht to ther destruccioun.
 And al that peepel, of oon oppynioun,
 Presentid hym, it was nat aftir longe,
 To Antigonus, bounde in cheynys stronge.

2276 which enraged
 them so that
 they delivered
 Eumenes up to
 Antigonus
 in chains,

2280

In this processe breeffli to proceede,
 At gret myscheef he deied in prisoun;
 He fond no mercy, pleyntli, as I reede,
 For al his noblesse nor his hih renoun.
 Yit of his manhod it is maad menciou[n],
 Who that his stori list to looke ariht,
 With Alisaundre ther was no bettir kniht.

2284 and he perished
 miserably in
 prison,—

2288

In his conquest eueri hour & space
 He most cherisshed for his hih noblesse;
 Aboue al othir stood most in his grace,
 To helpe & releue folk in ther distresse,

2292 he who had
 before
 been
 most cherished
 by Alexander.

2255. And] *om.* H — Eumenes P.

2270. day] *om.* H. 2273. castell H.

Al-be that he deied in wrechidnesse:
To vs declaryng the grete variaunces
That al-day falle in Fortunys chauncis.

2296

[¶ Lenvoye.]

Duke Eumenes'
tragedy again
shews the
froward
doubleness of
Fortuna.

THIS tragedie of Duk Eumenydes [p. 236]
Sheweth of Fortune þe froward doubilnesse,

How worldli princis þat be rek[el]les,
With vnwar chaungis fallen in distresse; 2300
And ther may been no gretter heuynesse,
Afftir prosperite, nor no gretter payne,
Than aduersite which that is sodeyne.

There is no
greater sorrow
than sudden
adversity after
prosperity.

Grettest envie, wher is grettest p[r]les; 2304
Grettest await, wher is most richesse;
And grettest ese wher is rest & pes:
Wher most discord, most is heuynesse.

And of al sorwe, sorwefullest excesse 2308
Is thilke sorwe that doth a man constreyne,
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

Where there is
rest and peace
is greatest ease,
and where there
is most discord,
is greatest
heaviness.

Pryncis in erthe, of power pereles,
Which excelled al other in noblesse, 2312
Hadde in this world bi conquest most encres,
As Alisaundre his stori berth witnesse.

Remembre the* fyn of al ther hih prowesse
And the tryumphes to which thei dide atteyne: 2316
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

These powerful
heirs of Alex-
ander ended in
sudden
adversity, six
and thirty of
them, all of
whom had
great
possessions.

The stronge enheritour[s] which þat he out ches,
Sixe & thretti, the noumbre to expresse,
Which hadde pocessioun of kyngdamys dout[e]les, 2320
Ech thyng obeyeng to ther worthynesse,
Til Fortune thoruh hir doubilnesse
Shewed hir myht, vnwarli to ordeyne
Afftir prosperite aduersite sodeyne. 2324

Noble Princes,
avoid discord,
envy and
causeless anger;
do nothing of
hasty wilfulness,
lest there be
sudden
adversity.

Noble Princis, tauoide al disencres,
Among your-silff discordes doth represe.
Beth nat envious nor irous causeles;
Werkith no thyng of hasty wilfulness; 2328
Lat discrecioun been your gouerneresse:

2297. Eumenes P. 2300. chaunge H. 2301. ther] thei R.
2304. pres] pes J, peace P.
2308. sorwe] om. H — sorwefullest] sorowfull H.
2309. doth] om. R. 2315. the] ther B.
2318. enheritour R — he] be R, H. 2320. possessions R.
2327. nor] ne H.

For ther mut folwe, iff ye parte on tweyne,
 Affir prosperite aduersite sodeyne.

[How queene Olimpiades for she delited in vices
 moordre and vengeance deied atte mischeeff.]¹

NEXT in ordre to Bochas dede appeere,
 Affir the myscheef of Eumenides,
 The grete queen, *with* a ful pitous cheer,
 Moodir of Alisaundre, Olympiades,
 Born of the lyne of Eacides;*
 Among queenys, hir stori berth witnesse,
 Excellid al other of beute & richesse.

2332 After Eumenes,
 Olympias
 appeared before
 Bochas.
 She excelled all
 other queens in
 beauty and
 wealth,

2336

She was douhtir to Neptolonijs,
 The myhti kyng of Epirothes,
 And hadde suspect how Neptanabus
 Bi enchauntement put hymself in pres
 Of wifli trouthe to make hir rek[e]les.
 But Bochas heer, for to saue hir name,
 Writ but a liil of hir sclaudrous diffame.

and was
 daughter of
 Neoptolemus.
 2340 It was
 suspected that
 Nectanebes had
 been her lover,
 but Bochas
 wrote little of
 it.

2344

This said[e] queen, riht fair of hir visage,
 Was firste brouht foorth in thilke regiouns,
 Wher all the worthi of blood & of lynage
 Heeld thes sceptris & ther riche crowns,
 Thoruhout al Grece with ful pocessiouns;
 So that this queen that tyme nih & ferre
 Was of beute callid the lode-sterre.

She was
 very fair, and
 called the lode-
 star of beauty.
 2348

2348

But among al hir gret prosperite,
 Hir youthe flouryng in most souereyn noblesse,
 Hir ioie was medlid *with* gret aduersite,
 Whan Phelipp Macedo, to hir gret heuynesse,
 Was mortalli woundid in distresse,
 In Cithia bacerteyn nacioun
 Callid Tribalois, as maad is menciou[n].

Her joy was
 turned to
 aduersity when
 her husband,
 Philip,
 2356

2356

For in that contre upon a certeyn day,
 Wher-as he fauht & dede his besi peyne
 To gete a cite, & at the siege lay,

lost one of his
 eyes at
 a siege in
 Scythia;
 2360

2360

2330. ther] that R — ye parte] the party R.

2333. Eumenes P.

2336. Eacides] Gacides B, R, Gaades J.

2339. to] of R — Neoptolemus P. 2341. Nectanabus P.

2343. hir] hym R.

2361. fauht] fauh H. 2362. lay] late H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 96 recto.

And for thassaut dede his stuff ordeyne,
 He lost vnwarli oon of his eien tweyne, 2364
 That whan the queen beheeld his sodeyn wounde,
 She fill for sorwe * euene plat to grounde.

and her good
 name was in-
 jured by the
 suspicion of her
 adultery with
 Nectanebes.

Another thyng, bookis specefie,
 Troubled hir fame bi gret heuynesse: 2368
 The suspect sclaudre of auout[e]rie
 Wrouht bi Neptanabus enchauntyng hir fairnesse,
 The liht eclipsyng of hir hih noblesse
 Be swift[e] report for to hyndre hir name, — 2372
 What fleeth mor swift than doth wikked fame?

What flies more
 swiftly than
 evil report?
 What avails
 royal blood
 against it?

In womanheede, as auctours alle write,
 Most thyng comendid is ther chast honeste;
 Thyng most sclaudrous ther noblesse tatwite, 2376
 Is whan princessis of hasti freelte
 Exceede the boundis of wifli chastite:
 For what auaieth lynage or roial blood,
 Whan of ther lyuyng the report is nat good? 2380

The voice of
 slander once
 raised is not
 easily put down.

The hooli bed diffouled of mariage, [p. 237]
 Or onis soiled may nat recurid be;
 The vois goth forth & the froward langage
 Bi many rewem & many gret cite. 2384
 Sclaudre hath a* custum, & that is gret pite,
 Trewe outhir fals, bi contagious soun
 Onis reised [up] it goth nat lihtli doun.

To make
 matters still
 worse for
 Olympias, Philip
 took Cleopatra,
 wife of
 Alexander of
 Epirus, as his
 concubine.

And to mor hyndryng of Olympiades, 2388
 Phelipp from hir dede away* declayne;
 And of the kyng of Epirothes
 The wif he took[e] to his concubyne,
 Callid Cleopatra, pleynli to termyne. 2392
 And thus in myscheeff to encrece hir trouble,
 Ther fals auoutry gan to wexe double.

2363. ordeyne] ordey H.

2366. For sorwe she fill B, R — to] to the R.

2373. doth] om. J, P. 2377. freelte] cruelte H.

2381. diffouled] defoyled P.

2382. nat] om. H.

2383. MS. J, "nota de scandalo," in scribe's hand in red, margin of leaf 96 verso.

2385. a] of B, J, R — &] om. H — gret] om. J, H 5.

2386. outhir] or H — contagious] a contagious R 3, H 5.

2387. up] om. R, J, R 3, H 5.

2389. away dede from hir B, J, R.

Off this processe write I will no more,
Cause the mateer is abhomynable;
For kyng Phelipp the bargeyn bouhte sore,
As is remembred be cronicles ful notable,
Slayn on a day sitting at his table,
Ful sodenli or he took any heede; —
Pausanias dede that cruel deede.

Of which[e] slaughtre folwed a straunge cas,
As ye han herd, bi Pausanias wrouht:
Olympiades ful glad & murie was,
Heuy outward, hir herte void of thouht;
Yit feynyngli she hath out weies souht
For hym to holde solempne & roiall
Lik Greekis rihtis a feeste funerall.

Aftir whos deth, wrouht of gret cruelte,
Kyng Alisaundre maad no lenger let,
Made Pausanias taken for to bee
And to been hangid upon an hih gibet,
Vpon whos hed ther was a crowne set
Of gold & perle & riche stonis Inde
Be Olympiades, in story as I fynde.

For he stood gretli in the queenis grace;
And as folke dempte of suspeciouⁿ,
Thei mette togidre in many preve place,
Which gretli turned to hir confusioun;
For noise aroos thoruh al that regeoun,
That be thoccasioun of ther misleuyng,
How Pausanias slouh Phelipp the kyng.

But she anon in hir malis feruent
Fro the gebet made hym be take doun,
Made his bodi solempneli be brent,
Kept his exequies with gret oblacioun*
Aftir the rihtis of that regeoun,
Nat left behynde in parti nor in all
That appartened to feestis funerall.

Vpon kyng Phelipp, as it wer for the nonys
To doon hir lord a shame & [a] despiht,
Solempneli she made brenne the bonis

2396 Thus there was
adultery on
both sides, until
Philip was slain
at his table by
Pausanias.

2400

Olympias'
sorrow was
feigned;

2404

2408

and when
her son
Alexander
hanged
Pausanias,
she set a
rich crown on
his head,

2412

2416 for he had
been her lover
and stood high
in her favour.
This caused
still more
scandal,

2420

2424 She then had
him taken down
from the
gallows, and his
body was burnt
with royal
ceremonies

2428

on that of King
Philip, to do
her lord a shame
and a despite.

2432

2396. is] is so H.

2417. as] om. R. 2420. thoruh] thoruhout H.

2424. be] to be R. 2425. be] to be R.

2426. exequias R — oblacioun B. 2431. a] om. R.

Of Pausanias, for a fals appetit, —
 Vnto no man she hadde so gret delite;*
 For which this feste was lik in alle thynges
 To thexequies of princis & of kynges. 2436

She also made
 an offering to
 Apollo of the
 sword with
 which he killed
 Philip.

She made his suerd[e] also to be take,
 With which he slouh Phelipp the grete kyng,
 Offrid it up onli for his sake
 To forn Appollo, be record of writyng. 2440
 Which to hir was sclaunder & gret hyndryng,
 Caused folk deeme in ther entent,
 To slen kyng Phelipp how she was of assent.

All her
 pleasure was
 set on cruelty.
 She caused
 Cleopatra to
 hang herself
 and murdered
 her daughter.

To been cruel was set al hir plesauce: 2444
 For merciles, void of al pite,
 On Cleopatre causyng this vengauce,
 That she hirsilff[e] heeng upon a tre;
 Moordrid hir douhtir, the stori ye may see. 2448
 What malis may, yif it be declared,
 Vnto the malis of wommen be compared?

No malice can
 be compared to
 the malice of
 women. One
 in a thousand
 may be
 virtuous, one in
 two thousand
 merciful; and
 when enraged,
 no tiger is
 more cruel.

I speke of them that be malicious
 And list of custum for to be vengable: 2452
 Among a thousand oon may be vertuous,
 And in too thousand sum oon is merciablen;
 But whan thei been of rancour vntretable,
 Ther is no tigre mor cruel dout[e]lles, 2456
 Record I take off Olympiades.

Olympias
 thought herself
 strong because
 Alexander had
 conquered
 Persia;

And she of malis was mor set affire
 Texecute boldli hir vengauce,
 Bi thoccasioun of the gret empire 2460
 Of Perse & Mede, ful famous in substaunce,
 Which stood be conquest vnder the gouernaunce
 Of Alisaundre, wherbi she thouhte hir strong
 Tacheve ech thyng, wher it wer* riht or wrong. 2464

but Alexander
 was poisoned in
 Babylon.

Dempte hir poweer sholde ay contune [p. 238]
 Bi the mene of his hih mageste.
 God is strenger than the queen Fortune,
 Which suffred hir sone in his most dignite 2468
 In Babiloyne poisouned for to bee,
 As is remembred in many old histories,
 Aftir his tryumphes & [al] his gret victories.

2434. delite] despiht B, R, J, P. 2436. To] of H.

2454. is] may be H. 2459. Texecute] Execute R.

2464. wher] whether P — wer] be B, R, J, P, H 5.

2465. ay] ay wey R. 2471. al] om. P — gret] om. R, J, hih H.

But for to passe breeffli by* writyng,
 Touchyng this queen, as maad is menciouⁿ,
 Whan ded was Phelipp, the famous myhti kyng,
 She hadde off Macedoyne ful pocessioun,
 And gouerned that myhti regioun,
 Wher lik a woluesse, as auctours of hir write,
 To shede blood she gan hirsilff delite.

2472 She governed
 Macedonia
 like a wolness.

2476

In hir tirannye most feruent & irous,
 Reioisshe in slaughtre & to see men bleede;
 For serpent non was mor malicious
 Than was this queen, in bookis ye may reede.
 Yit afftir al this she resceyued hir meede;
 For thowh Fortune fauoured hir a while,
 Yit with hir treynes she koude hir weel begile.

2480 No serpent
 was more
 malicious.

2484

The eende of tirauntis & eek of tiraunessis,
 And of moorderis, be thei neuer so wood,
 Of poisounmongeris & enchaunteressis,
 Of fals supplantours, contrarie to all good,
 And of conspireres & them that thriste blood, —
 Alle thes muste han bi Goddis purueyaunce
 Heer short liff or sodenli vengauce.

2488 Tyrants and
 tyrannesses,
 poisonmongers
 and enchan-
 tresses have
 short lives.

2492

In Macedoyne this queen was most behatid
 For hir vengable mortal oppressioun;
 And Cassander ageyn hir hath debatid
 And gunne a werre upon hir regeoun,
 Which Talisaundre mynystrid the poisoun,
 As ye han herd, afforn of hym deuised,
 Bi Antipater most mortalli practised.

2496 She was
 hated in
 Macedon,
 and when
 Cassander
 made war
 on her,

She fond no reffut, but took hir to the fliht,
 This cruel queen, this Olympiades,
 Into a mownteyn that stood ferr out of siht;
 And of hir kyn ther folwed hir gret pres,
 Supposyng talyued ther in pes.
 For on that hill stood a gret dongoun,
 Strongli walled abouten envirooun,

2500 she fled to
 a mountain
 stronghold

2504

Which that marchid to a gret cite
 Callid Epidna, stondyng in gret doute,
 Because Cassander of old enmyte

2508 near Epidna,
 where she was
 besieged by
 Cassander and
 captured by
 treachery.

2472. by] the B, R, to the J.

2492. Heer] Outhir her H — or sodenli] on sodeyn R.

2496. hir] his R, a H. 2504. talyued] ta lyven H.

- Hadde for hir leide a seege [al] aboute.
 And non was hardi for to issen oute,
 Til Cassander, of fals compassed tresoun, 2512
 Made with them a composicioun.
- Cassander
 assured her
 that she might
 live in peace,
 His feith was leid that tyme for hostage,
 Bi oth assurid to Olympiades,
 Bi couert fraude vnder fair langage, 2516
 To suffren hir with hym to lyue in pes.
 But of his promys, he fals & rek[e]les,
 For vnder trete, as maad is mencioun,
 The queen he took & cast hir in prisoun. 2520
- but broke his
 promise.
 Removed from
 prison, she faced
 her enemies
 with imperial
 courage,
 But wil ye seen a roial hih corage,
 How boldeli, delyuered fro prisoun,
 She descendid, imperial of visage,
 With al hir maidnes aboute hir envirooun, 2524
 Hir enmyes present, wodere than leoun,
 Seyng hir stonde so statli of hir face,
 Whan thei wer proudest tareste hir & manace.
- attired for the
 occasion like an
 empress in rich
 purple and gold.
 She was arraied of purpos for the nonys, 2528
 As seith Bochas, in most statli wise;
 In riche purpil, gold & precious stonis,
 Lik an emperesse in the Grekissh guise.
 Hir list nat fleen, the stori doth deuse, 2532
 With cry nor noise passed nat hir boundis,
 Whan that hir blood down railed from hir woundis.
- She did not
 try to escape,
 even when the
 blood flowed
 from her
 wounds.
 She nat affraied in al hir mortal shour[e]s;
 Void of al feer[e] list nat bowe hir chyne, 2536
 Make no praieer to hir tormentour[e]s,
 Nor no tokne of corage femynyne.
 Vpriht she stood[e], list nat doun declyne,
 Gaff euidence*, as it is comprehendid, 2540
 Of what lyne & blood she was descendid.
- She stood erect
 and shewed of
 what line she
 was descendid.
 Never did a
 prince or
 princess die
 more proudly.
 For vnto tyme that she gaf up the breth,
 Was neuer sey[e]n prince nor princesse
 That mor proudli took ther fatal deth. 2544
 For as I deeme, hir marcial hardynesse
 Cam from Bellona, of armys cheef goddesses;
 Outher she hadde it bynfluence of corage
 Youe bi the goddis to hire & hir lynage. 2548

2511. issen] isshu H. 2516. fair] fals H.

2531. the] ther H — Grekis R. 2533. nor] & H.

2536. cheyne R, cheyn H.

2540. euidence] Euidencis B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P. 2546. fro R.

Force is a vertu, bookis spesefie,
 Ageyn al vices to make resistence;
 But froward rancour & wood* malencolie
 Gaff hir a spirit of feyned pacience,
 A fals pretence of hih* magnificence,
 Ascauns* she hadde been in vertu strong,
 For trouthe to haue endurid eueri wrong.

Contrarious force made hir despitous,
 Strong in hir erroure to endure peyne;
 Of obstynat herte she was fell & irous,
 In dethis constreynt list nat to compleyne.
 Countirfet suffraunce made hir for to feyne;
 Nothyng of vertu, pleyntli to termyne,
 Nor of no manerys* that be femynyne.

In hir entrailles al malis was enclosed
 And al contagious venym serpentyne,
 Nat lik a woman, but as a feend disposid,
 Able to destroie al vertuous disciplyne:
 Thus she began; thus she dede fyne.
 In vicious moordre she dede hir ay delite,
 Wherfor of hire me list no mor tendite.

[p. 239] Power is a
 virtue to resist
 vice; but it
 was perverse
 rancour and
 mad rage that
 2552 gave her a
 false pretence
 of magnificence.

2556 Obstynacy kept
 her from
 complaining;
 there was
 neither virtue
 nor womanli-
 ness in her.

2560

2564 Her nature was
 like that of a
 fiend.

2568

¶ Lenvoye.

ALLE ye that shal this tragedie see,
 Of routhe & merci hath compassioun,
 To seen a princesse from hir imperial see
 So vnwarli by Fortune throwe down.
 Of whos myscheeff this was thoccasioun,
 That in thre thynges was set most hir plesaunce:
 In vicious lust*, in moordre & in vengauce.

2572 Have com-
 passion on this
 princess, so
 suddenly
 thrown down
 by Fortune.

Alas, that euer the mortal cruelte
 Of bloodi suerd bi execucioun
 Sholde been appropriid to femynyte,
 Ageyn the nature of ther condicioun!
 Causyng the fynal sclaudrous confusioun

2576 Alas, that
 women should
 be so
 unnatural as to
 draw the
 sword!

2580

2551. wood] proud B, R, J. 2553. hih] his B, hir R.
 2554. Ascauns] As scauns B, J, As skawns R 3.
 2559. constreynt] compleynt H.
 2562. manerys] mannys B, R, J, R 3, H, mannes H 5.
 2563. And in hir entraile H. 2565. as] like H.
 2569. tendite] endite H. 2575. thynges] kynges R.
 2576. lust] lyff B, R, J, life P — 3rd in] om. H, J, H 5, P, fals
 R 3. 2580. the] om. H.

- Of Olympiades, heer put in remembraunce,
For vicious lust, moordre & fals vengauce.
- The serpent
hides under
fresh flowers,
and deep pits
lie beneath
crystal waters.
- Vnder fressh flours, riht soote & fair to see,
The serpent dareth with his couert poisoun.
In cristal watres that calm & smothe* bee
Arn pereillous pettis ful of decepcioun.
Men seen alday bi cleer inspeccioun
In feynyng facis angelik suffisaunce;
Hid vndir-nethe rancour & gret vengauce.
- 2584
- Though she
excelled all
in beauty,
no princess was
ever more
savage and
revengeful.
- Thouh she excellid of hir natiff beute
Al othir princ[ess]is of that regeoun,
Was neuer sey[e]n feller non than she,
To execute lik hir oppenyoun
The pereilous treynys contreued of tresoun,
And specialli in hir pompous greuaunce,
Wher she hated, for to do vengauce.
- 2592
- Noble Prin-
cesses, be
merciful and
forgiving,
temper your
indignation with
pity.
- Noble Princessis, set hih in dignite,
Doth aduertise of discrecioun,
In your most poweer & largest liberte
Beth merciable & doth remyssion,
Sugreþ with pite your indignacioun,
Lat grace & merci tempre your hih puissaunce,
Of Olympiades eschewyng the vengau[n]ce.
- 2596
- 2600
- Cankered
rancour does not
belong to
womanhood;
and where
mercy reigns
grace abounds.
- Exilith rigour ferr out of contre,
Yiue hym with you no iurediccioun.
To womanheede longeth nat, parde,
Of cancred rancour newe execucioun.
Wher mercy regneth, of grace ther is foisoun,
Hath this in mynde bi long contynvaunce,
Of Olympiades forgetyng the vengauce.
- 2604
- 2608
- Let patience
dwell in your
hearts;
- Lat pacience bi vertuous plente
Withynne your hertis purchase a mansioun;
Lat your compassioun attempren equite,
That riht excede nat the boundis of resoun,
So that your femynyn humble entencioun
Be alway bridled be prouident suffraunce,
Voidyng al excessis of rigour & vengauce.
- 2612
- 2616

2584. faire & soote H.

2586. smothe] soote B, R, soot J.

2589. feynyng] femynyne H, H 5, femynyn R 3, feminine P.

2597. for] om. R. 2600. largest] latest R.

2602. your pite with H.

For it is said of old auctorite,
 To wommen longeth bi disposicioun
 Meeknesse in langage, in port humylite,
 In al vertu humble subieccioun,
 Void of manacis, striff & contencioun,
 So that no man in your attendaunce
 Espie no tokne of rancour nor vengauce.

2620 for it is said
 of old, that
 meekness and
 humility are
 appropriated
 to womankind.

The especial mene, the parcialite
 Sholde of al merci be descripsioun
 Rebounde to women; for of antiquite
 The lamb nat vsed to pleie the leoun,
 Nor no meek dowue envied the faucoun.
 Nor to your sect, bi natural accordaunce,
 Sitt nouthur rigour nor hasti fel vengauce.

2628 The lamb is
 not accustomed
 to play
 the lion, nor
 does the dove
 envy the
 falcon.

This symple Lenvoie, resceyueth it at gre
 And hath therof non indignacioun,
 Lowli direct to your benignite
 Onli of meeknesse & no presumpcioun,
 Knowyng of kynde your inclynacioun
 Disposed is bi natural purueiaunce
 Vnto al merci, & nothyng onto vengauce.

[p. 240] 2636 Let this simple
 envoy not
 offend you, for
 it is lowly
 directed to
 your benignity
 by one who
 knows that your
 nature is dis-
 posed to mercy.

[How Agathodes of lowe birthe born atteyned to
 roial dignite/ ended in pouerte and wrecchid-
 nesse.]¹

I HAUE herd seid of ful yore agon,
 A whirle-wynd[e], blowing nothing softe,
 Was in old Inglish callid a rodion,*
 That reiseth duste & strauh ful hih alofte.
 And in thascendyng (it falleth so ful ofte),
 Thouh it be bor[e]n almost to the skie,
 Wher it becomth ther can no man espie.

2640 A whirlwind
 used to be
 called a rodion;
 and when it
 rises, no man
 can say what
 becomes of it.

2629. 2nd the] with be H.

2630. dowue] down (?) H — Facoun H.

2633. This stanza is omitted in H.

2636. no] none R.

2640. The Explicit to Book IV and Incipit to the Prologue of Book
 V are misplaced here in H.

2641. whorle wynde H, whyrwynd H 5.

2642. rodian B, other MSS. and P, rodion.

2644. it] is H. 2645. to] in to H, R 3.

2643. That] And H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 97 verso.

Smoke often
ascends
mountain high;
but just as
often, when
a sudden rain
comes, it
descends again.

Out of forgis bi fire þat smethis make,
Bi cleer experience it is ful ofte seyn, 2648
That thes infernal ougli smokes blake
Transcende the coppe of many gret mounteyn;
But ofte sithe bi a ful sodeyn reyn
Al such ascenciouns, bi rage of wynd up blowe, 2652
With vnwar tourn be reuersed & brouht lowe.

One of the
greatest of
misfortunes
is when
a low-born
wretch
is lifted to
high estate.

And semblably to putte it at a preeff
And execute it bi cleer experience,
On the moste contrarious myscheeff 2656
Founde in this erthe, bi notable euidence,
Is onli this: bi fortunat violence
Whan that a wrech[e], cherlissh of nature,
Thestat of princis vnwarli doth recure. 2660

A crowne of
gold is not
suitable for the
head of a
knaue, nor
should a stupid
clerk wear a
ring.

A crowne of gold is nothyng accordyng
For to be set upon a knauis hed;
A foltissh clerk for to were a ryng
Accordeth nothyng, who that kan take heed. 2664
And in this world ther is no gretter dreed
Than poweer youe, yif it be weel souht,
Vnto such on that first roos up of nouht.

We do not set
precious stones
in copper; and
the estate of
political power
is lost when
knaues have
governance.

Ther is no maner iust convenience, 2668
A roial charboncle, rubie or garnet,
Nor a chast emeraud of vertuous excellence,
Nor ynde saphirs in coper to be set, —
Ther kyndli poweer in foul metal is let; 2672
And so thestat of politik puissaunce
Is lost wher-euer knaues haue goÿernaunce.

They rise up
like windy
smokes; and a
crowned ass
is more to be
dreaded than
a lion.

For a tyme thei may weel up ascende,
Lik wyndi smokes ther boistous fumys spreede. 2676
A crownid asse, pleynli to comprehende,
Void of discrecioun is mor for to dreede
Than is a leoun: for the ton in deede
Of his nature is myhti & roiall; 2680
Void of discrecioun, the tothir bestiall.

The lion is
merciful to
those who lie
prostrate before
him; the
crowned ass
is always cruel.

The gentil nature of a strong leoun
To prostrat peep[e] of kynde is mercriable;
For vnto all that falle afforn hym down 2684
His roiall puissaunce cannat be vengable.

2648. often H.

2654. semblable R. 2659. a wrech] wrecches J.

2679. a] om. H. 2682. The] This R.

But cherliss wolues, bi rigour vntretable,
And foltissh assis, eek of bestialite,
Failyng resoun, braide euer on cruelte.

2688

Non is so proud as he that can no good,
The leudere hed, the mor presumpcioun,
Most cruelte & vengauce in louh blood,
Wher malepertnesse, ther indiscrecioun.
Of cherl & gentil make this dyuisioun:
Of outhur of them I dar riht weel reporte,
The stok thei cam fro, therto thei wil resorte.

No one is so
proud as a
good-for-
nothing;
ignorance and
presumption,
2692 impudence and
indiscretion, go
hand in hand.

The rose knowe be colour & suetnesse,
And violettis for ther fressh tarage,
The netle rouh[e] for his fel sharpnesse,
Thistlis, breeris prikyng bi gret outrage:
And thus considred the rote of ech lynage,
Froward techchis been euer in cherlis founde,
Wher vnto gentillesse ay vertu doth rebounde.

2696 The rose and
the violet and
nettles and
briars are
always true to
their stock, and
rudeness is in-
variably found
2700 in the line of
churls.

Lat men bewar in special of o thyng,
How gret decepcioun is in fals coignage:
The plate may be briht in his shewyng,
The metal fals & shewe a fair visage.
Al is nat gold, to speke in pleyn langage,
That shynith briht; concludyng of* resoun,
Vnder fair cheer is ofte hid fals poisoun.

2704 We must
remember that
all is not gold
that shines
bright;

For as a skie or an ougli cloude
Which that ascendith lowe out of the se,
And with his blaknesse doth the sunne shroude,
That men may nat his gret[e] brihtnesse see
Nor haue no counfort of his cleer beute,
So vicious techchis, I do you weel assure,
Difface ful ofte the giftes of nature.

for vicious traits
deface the
gifts of nature
no less than
2712 ugly black
clouds obscure
the sun.

2716

God onto summe hath youen bi nature
For to excellen another in fairnesse;
Yit in vicis, be record of scripture,
Thei wer disclaundred, Bochas berth witnesse:
Outward sugre, inward bittirnesse.
Bi which exa^mple, to purpos I may call
Agathodes, fulfilled of vices all.

[p. 241] God has made
some men fair
yet vicious, as
was Agathocles.

2720

2692. Wher] With P — malapertnesse R, J, R 3, malapertenesse
H, malapertnes P

2703. bewar] ware R. 2708. of] on B, J, H 5, R.

2709. often H — hid] om. R.

2717. hath] as R. 2723. Agathocles P.

If I were to describe his outrageous life, it would ruin the paper I write on.

In this stori he kometh now on the ryng,
Which of beute hadde passyng excellence; 2724

But to declare his vicious lyuyng
And to descryue his outraious offence, —
Yif I sholde writen in sentence 2728

Lik his demerites hooli the maneer,
It wolde thoruh perse & blotte my paper.

He was the son of a potter and too proud to follow his father's trade.

Touchyng his berthe, of louh[e] bed descendid,
Sone of a pottere, the story ye may see, 2732

In no vertu I fynde hym nat comendid,
Except nature gaff hym gret beute.
Fostrid in myscheeff & in gret pouerte,
Hadde eek disdeyn, I can hym nat excuse, 2736
Of hatful pride his fadris craft to vse.

Through his great beauty he rose to high estate, and although he was soiled by pride and unnatural vice,

Bi the mene of his gret fairnesse
To hih estat he cam fro louh degre;
Yit in a vice which I wil nat expresse 2740
He disusid cursidli his beute

Ageyn nature, that euel mut he* the.
And soiled he was, shortli to specefie,
With al the vicis* of pride & lecherie. 2744

God allowed him for a time to be fortunate and govern nations.

Yit natwithstondyng his fals condiciouns,
God suffred hym to come to hih estat,
And to gouerne dyuers naciouns,
I fynde a while how he was fortunat, 2748

In his lecherie ay pompous & elat;
And in a cite callid Ciracuse
The said[e] vices he frowardli* gan^o vse.

In Syracuse he had the command of one hundred knights

And for he hadde beute & gret myht, 2752
To alle vices his youthe he dede enclyne,
And koude also foorthre hymself ariht,
Of elloquence expert in the doctryne.

And, as is said, thowh he cam of low lyne, 2756
Yit, as it is put in remembraunce,
An hundred knihtis he hadde in gouernaunce.

and purchased the office of centurion. Afterwards he was chosen a tribune and finally he was elected duke.

Off centurien he purchacid an offis,
And that tyme he took the ordre of kniht; 2760
Aftir chose a tribun of gret pris,
And gat gret fauour in the peeplis siht.

2727. offence] diffence H. 2742. he] thei B, R, J.

2744. vicis] spicis B, R, H, spices J, R 3, spyces H 5, spises P.

2751. he frowardli] frowardli he B, R, J. 2756. as] as it H.

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And in this while, it fill so anon riht,
Of Siracusis he was maad duk & hed
Bi eleccioun, because ther lord was ded.

2764

Which with Siciliens heeld a mortal striff;
But Agathodes made hem* victorious,
Took ther duchesse aftir to his wiff,
Bi mene wheroff he wex ful glorious.
And in his glorie he greuh riht despitous,
Forgat hymself, thus growyng in estat,
Wherthoruh his cite & he wer at debat.

2768

He defeated the
Sicilians and
married their
duchess, and,
increasing in
magnificence
and power,

His condicioun whan thei gan espie,
And sauh hym werke al of presumpcioun,
The peeple anon, knowyng his tirannye,
Exilid hym out of ther regioun.
In his exil, as maad is menciou, n,
He coude fynde no bettir cheuisaunce,
But cam tacite that callid was Murgauce.

2772

grew proud and
quarrelled with
his city.

2776

Wher bi his sleiht sotil fals auis,
He so demened hym in the peeplis siht,
That of a pretor thei gaff hym an offis,
He meuyng them in al that euer he miht
Geyn Siracusis to make hem stronge & fih, t,
Of entent on them tauenged bee,
Cause for his exil out of that cite.

2780

His people
exiled him to
Murgantia,
where he
became a
pretor and
tried to stir
up strife
against
Syracuse in
revenge.

2784

But in [his] exil, the stori seith non othir,
It was so wrouht bi mediacioun
Of duk Amulchar, that was his sworn brother,
Siracusanis off oon entencioun
Callid [him] hom ageyn into ther toun;
And ther he was restored to his place
And reconciled to the peeplis* grace.

2788

Duke Hamilcar
persuaded the
Syracusans to
restore him;
and after the
reconciliation
they also made
him a pretor.

2792

And vnto hym thei gaf be gret auis,
Bassent of lordis & al the comoun, te,
Of a pretor newli an offis.
For pretores of custom callid be
Officers that duelle in a* cite,
And han ful charge bi doom & iugementis
To putte al gilti to payne & to tormentis.

2796

2800

2767. Agathocles P — hem] hym B.

2773. condiciouns H — gan] did H.

2775. knowyng his] all of R.

2791. him] om. H, R, J, R 3, H 5, P.

2793. peeplis] kyngis B, R, J. 2798. a] the B, R, J.

- Armed with
new authority,
he caused all
the senators to
be slain,
- Than of newe this Agathodes,
Because he hadde mor auctorite,
Caste for to trouble the quiete & the pes
Of Siracusi; & out of that cite
Alle the senatours grettest of dignite,
Of mortal vengauce this tiraunt made anon
Withoute excepcioun be slayn euerichon.
- and not content
with that,
pillaged the
whole of Sicily
and claimed the
title of king.
- This hasti slauhtre wrouht bi tiranⁿye
Miht nat assuage nor staunche his fel corage,
Til he ther tresours took bi robberie,
And al Sicile he spoiled be pillage.
Cast of pride upon an hier stage
For tascende bi sleiht fals werkyng,
Of al that regeoun he to be crowned kyng.
- Put to flight
by the duke of
Carthage,
- Made his subgettis, maugre them, hym dreedyng,
To calle hym kyng, and in especiall,
Oon the most worthi prince tho lyuyng
That sat in chaier of mageste roiall,—
Til Fortune shoop he muste haue* a fall;
For of Cartage the duk, a worthi kniht,
Fauht with hym twies & put hym to the fliht.
- he returned home
in disgrace,
- Wherthoruh he stood in myscheef disespeired,
And of al peeple he was had in disdeyn;
To Siracuse in haste he is repeired
And to his cite retourned hom ageyn,
Ther abidyng in dred & noun certeyn,—
For whan Fortune gan ageyn hym take,
His freendis olde of newe han hym forsake.
- and, collecting
a new army,
defeated the
Carthaginians
- In that myscheeff he abood nat long,
As the processe maketh rehersaille,
Gadred peeple & made hymself strong,
Onli in purpos al Affrik to assaille,
With them of Cartage hadde a gret bataille,
Them discourtfited, as Fortune list ordeyne,
Bi hih prowesse of his sonis tweyne.
- with the help
of his two
sons,
Archagathus
and Hecelida.
- Artagathus Icallid was the ton,
Wonder delyuer, a man of gret[e] myht,
The seconde brother, most worthi of echon,

[p. 242]

2804

2808

2812

2816

2820

2824

2828

2832

2836

2818. chaer R. 2819. haue] han B.

2831, 32 are transposed in R, but correction indicated.

2832. for tassaille H, R 3, H 5. 2834. discourtfited R.

2836. Archagathus P. 2837. a] & a B, H, R, H 5, R 3.

Callid Eraclida, which in that mortal fht
 Preued hymselff that day a manli kniht;
 For bi ther manhod, in which ther was no lak,
 Thei of Cartage wer felli put abak.

2840

For thouh so were bi fortune of the werre
 Agathodes hadde that day victorie,
 Fals couetise made hym for to erre
 And eclipsed the liht of his glorie.
 For as it is remembred in historie,
 Lik as his berth, as it toforn termyned,
 To al falsnesse his corage was enclyned.

2844

Although he
 was victorious,
 covetousness
 made him err,

2848

Cruel of custum, of herte merciles,
 His will was lawe, wher it were* wrong or riht;
 Contrarie taccord, frowar[d] vnto pes,
 Proud & surquedous in his owne siht
 Wher his poweer stretchid & his myht,
 Lik a tiraunt natureli disposed
 Texecute vengauunce afforn purposed.

2852

and, true to
 his low origin,
 he became a
 revengeful
 tyrant.

He thouhte he hadde poweer for to bynde
 Fortunis wheel for to abide* stable,
 Which is a thyng contrarie to hir kynde,
 Whos propirte is to be variable:
 His pride, alas, was to abhomynable;
 For mortal prynce is non that may restreyne
 Hir vnwar tourn nor hir cours sodeyne.

2856

He thought he
 had power to
 bind fast
 Fortune's
 wheel, the
 nature of
 which is to be
 unstable;

Bi influence of the heuenli steris,
 The vnkouth cours aboue celestiall,
 Bi Fortune, & fauour of the werris,
 This Agothodes, of berthe but* rurall,
 Promooted was vnto estat roiall.

2864

but pride,
 outrageous
 behaviour and
 low birth
 caused him
 to fall.

Til pride, outrage & froward engendrure
 Caused in his lordship he myht nat long endure.

2868

Fortune of kynde is so flaskisable,
 A monstuous beeste departed manyfold,
 A slidyng serpent, turnyng & vnstable,
 Slepир to gripe; on whom ther is non hold,

2872

Fortune is like
 a serpent,
 slippery to the
 grasp. There is
 no hold on her.

2839. Heraclida P — which] with R. 2843. the] that R.

2848. 1st as] om. H, R 3, H 5, P — it toforn] it toforn is H,

R 3, it is toforn H 5. 2851. were] was B, om. J.

2858. tabide B. 2864. enfluence R.

2867. Agathocles P — but] ful B, R, J, P, H 5.

2869. engendrure] aventure H, engendur R 3.

2870. nat] om. H.

2874. Slepир] Slipir H, R 3, Sliper J, P, Slyper H 5 — non] no R.

As in this book declared is & told,
 Hir poweer preeued on princis rek[e]les: 2876
 Record with other on Agathodes.

Agathocles was
 born in poverty
 and rose to
 royal estate;
 his fall was
 the more
 grievous because
 sudden.

As ye han herd rehersed in sentence,
 Symple & bare was his natyuite,
 Brouht up & fostred in gret indigence, 2880
 Out of a stok spryngyng of pouerte,
 Roos to thestat of roial dignite.

The* risyng vnkouth, merueilous tatteyne,
 The fal mor greuou because it was sodeyne. 2884

From Siracuse he was exiled twies; [p. 243]

Vengable* of herte wher he hadde myht.

Of Affrican[e]s disconfited thries;

Euer in bataile of custum put to fliht. 2888

Hadde an vsaunce to robbe day & niht,

And lik a tiraunt, ageyn conscience,

To spoile his subiectis bi rauynous violence.

His two
 sons were slain
 in Africa; and
 he became weak
 in his limbs and
 was stricken by
 pestilence.

Hyndred bi Fortune, wherof he was nat fayn, 2892

Hir strook ageyn hym sodeyn & violent:

His sonis two in Affrik were* first slayn,

He of his lymys wex feeble & impotent.

With a consumpcioun his entrailles brent, 2896

And bi an agu, contynuel of feruence,

He was supprised bi strook of pestilence.

He lost his
 wealth, his kin,
 his wife and
 friends; his
 victories were
 forgotten, his
 name eclipsed,
 and he died
 in misery.

Al his tresour [Fortune] hath for hym take,

His proude port & his worldli glorie; 2900

His kyn, his freendis & wif hath hym forsake,

His conquest dirk & put out of mæmorie:

His name clipped of al his old victorie.

And as he gan in pouert & distresse, 2904

So he made an eende in wrechidnesse.

Men expect to
 see a sudden
 fall after a
 rapid and
 dishonest
 ascent.

Hasti risyng, & thrifft that is sodeyne,

And surmountyng bi violent rauyne,

And extort poweer, may for a tyme atteyne 2908

In riche chaier of lordshipe for to shyne.

Sodeyn ascendyng doth sodenli declyne;

And bi vntrouthe, wher-euer ther be encres,

Men waite of custum a sodeyn disencres. 2912

2876. Hir] His R. 2883. The] Ther B, R, J, P.

2886. Vengable] Vengabli B, R, J, P. 2894. were] was B.

2895. Inpotent R. 2897. Agwe R. 2899. Fortune] om. R, J.

2901. &] his H. 2903. His] he H. 2904. &] in H.

2907. rauyne] Rapyne H, R 3, H 5.

2909. chaier] chaar H — for] om. H. 2911. ther] om. R.

Of Agathodes men may exaample take,
 What is the eende of eueri fals tiraunt.
 Wrong clymbyng up dop a foul eende make:
 For a sesoun thouth tirauntis be puissant,
 Fortune to them yeueth no lenger graunt;
 But whan thei sitte on hir wheel most roiall,
 Bi vnwar chaung to haue a sodeyn fall.

Agathocles
 is a good
 example.

2916

Agothodes was firste a symple man,
 Brouht forth in myscheeff and in pouerte,
 Sone of a pottere, his stori telle can,
 Bi vicious lyuyng cam to gret dignite,
 Of alle folk hatid for his cruelte,
 Clamb fro pouert up to gret richesse,
 Maad poore ageyn, deied in wrechidnesse.

2920 The son of a
 potter, he rose
 to great wealth
 and dignity
 through vicious
 living, and died
 in wretched-
 ness.

2924

[Lenvoye]

THIS tragedie sheweth a figure
 Bothe bi stori & bi auctorite,
 How man and beeste & euery creature
 Tarageth the stok of his natyuite:
 Herbe of the roote, & ech frut of his tree,
 For bothe of vertu & also of outrage
 Folweth sum tech or tast of the lynage.

2928 This tragedy
 shews how
 every creature
 takes after his
 parent's stock
 for better or
 for worse.

2932

Agathodes, bi record of scripture,
 Born of lough bed, brouht foorth in pouerte,
 Yit Fortune made hym to recure
 Vp to hih estat from ful lough degre.
 His resoun blent with sensualite,
 Forgat hymselff, to speke in pleyⁿ langage,
 Thoruh a fals tech that cam from his lynage.

2936 Agathocles,
 born of low
 bed, rose
 to high estate
 and forgot
 himself
 in consequence
 of his base
 lineage.

2940

Ther is a difference of colours in peynture,*
 On table or wal, as men alday may see;
 Tween gold & gold, atween bis & asure:
 Al is nat gold that shyneth briht, parde;
 Sum noble is fals that hath ful gret beute, —
 Lat men bewar of countirfet coignage,
 Techchis eschewyng of cherlissh low lynage.

2944 There is a
 difference
 between gold
 and gold and
 smalt and
 azure. All is
 not gold that
 glitters,

2913. Agathocles P. 2918. most] *om.* H, R 3, P.
 2922. his] the R. 2930. his] *om.* H.
 2941. peynture] picture B, J, R, P.
 2943. atween] tween R.

nor may a kite
fly with royal
eagles.

Sum man forthred of sodeyn auenture, 2948
Set in a chaier of roial dignite,
Wenyng his empire euer sholde endure,
Neuer to be troubled with non aduersite:
With roial egles a kite may nat flee, 2952
A iay may chatre in a goldene cage,
Yit euer sum tech mut folwe of his lynage.

Gentle blood is
merciful, but
boors are
always cruel,
following the
nature of their
churlish birth.

Gentil blood of his roial nature
Is euer enclyned to merci & pite, 2956
Wher of custum thes vileyns do ther cure,
Bi ther vsurpid & extort fals pouste
To be vengable bi mortal cruelte,
Thoruh hasti fumys of furious corage, 2960
Folwyng the techchis of ther vileyn lynage.*

O mighty
Princes, let
Agathocles be
your worldly
mirror; avoid
his example, as
your royal blood
requires of you.

O myhti Princis, your noblesse doth assure,
Your passious resteth with tranquillite,
Seeth how ther is no mene nor mesure, 2964
Wher a tiraunt cacheth the souereyntel
Let Agathodes your worldli merour bee,
Teschewe the traxis of his froward passage,
As roiall blood requereth of your lynage. 2968

[How Cassander slouh the wif of Alisaundre &
hercules hir sone/ and Antipater slouh his moder
& of other moordres.]¹

After the death
of Agathocles,
twelve men
and women
appeared before
Bochas; and the
first

THE grete myschevys* of Fortunys miht,[p. 244]
The woful fallis from hir wheel in deede
Of princis, princessis, who-so looke ariht,
Been lamentable & doolful for to reede. 2972
But for al that, Bochas doth proceede
In his rehersaile, remembryng thus hym-selue,
To hym appeered of men & women twelue.

was Bersane,
wife of
Alexander the
Great.

Aftir the deth of kyng Agathodes, 2976
Ther cam toforn hym worthi queenis tweyne:
The firste of them was callid Bersanes,
And of hir myscheef gan to hym compleyne,
Wiff to Alisaundre, the stori list nat feyne, 2980

2950. his] hir H. 2954. tech] om. H. 2960. forious R.

2961. lynage] langage B.

2963. resteth] wrestith H, R 3, H 5, rest P.

2969. myschevys] myscheeff B, J, R, P — miht] aventure R.

2974. thus remembryng H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 99 verso.

The myhti kyng, grettest vnder sunne,
Which bi conquest al this world hath wonne.

Wiff unto hym* was this Bersanes,*
Bi his lyue, as maad is menciou[n],
Which with hir sone, named Hercules,
Wer bi Cassander brouht to destruccioun.
And of ther* deth this was thoccasioun,
Cassander dradde that Bersanes the queen
Wolde with hir sone on hym auengid been

2984 She and her
son Hercules
were slain by
Cassander, who
feared their
vengeance

For his tresouns, which he toforn hath wrouht
On Alisaundre & on his lynage;
And specialli, yiff that she were* brouht
To Macedoine for hir auauntage,
With hir sone, that was but yong of age,
Cassander thouhte & dradde, as I haue told,
Thei wolde auenge his tresouns wrouhte of old.

2988 for his treason
to Alexander,

He caste afforn* of malis causeles,
This Cassander, most fals in his werkyng,
That yif this kniht, this yonge Hercules,
Sone of Alisaundre, bi record of writyng,
In Macedoyne wer take & crownid kyng,
How that he wolde of equite & riht
His fadris deth auengen lik a kniht.

3000 Cassander did
not want
Hercules to
become king
of Macedon,

Which thyng teschewe Cassander gan prouide,
And bi fals fraude was nat rek[e]les;
But on a day (he list nat longe abide)
Slouh first the que[n], this said[e] Bersanes,
And thanne hir sone Icallid Hercules.
Thus bi Cassander, of moordre cropp & roote,
Thei moordred wern; ther was non othir boote.

3004 so he first
murdered
Bersane and
then her son,

This cruelte myht[e] nat suffise
Vnto Cassander, be record of scripture;
But lik a tiraunt in vengable wise
He dede hem burie, bi froward auenture,
Wher no man sholde knowe ther sepulture.
And thus, alas, which pite is to reede,
He moordred foure out of oon kynreede.

3012 and, like a
tyrant,
ordained that
they should
be buried in
unknown
graves.

2981. sunne] þe sonne H.

2983. unto hym] to Alisaundre B, R, J, P — Bersanes] Bersabes B.

2987. ther] hir B, J, R, P. 2992. were] was B.

2997. afforn] of afforn B. 2998. fals in his] falsli B, J.

3011. cruelte] om. H — nat] nat enuh H.

- He gave
Alexander
poison and slew
Olympias,
Bersane and
Hercules.
- To Alisaundre he mynistrid the poisoun,
Slouh the queen callid Olympiades,
And of hatreede bi ful fals tresoun, 3020
As I haue tolde, he slouh queen Bersanes,
Wif to Alisaundre, mooder to Hercules,
Which in youthe, bi Bochas rehersyng,
In Macedoyne was lik to haue been kyng. 3024
- Afterwards he
killed Queen
Roxana, another
wife of
Alexander, and
her two young
sons.
- Afttir al this he koude nat lyue in pes,
But euer redi sum tresoun for to do,
Slouh eek the queen[e] callid Roxanes 3028
Vpon a day, & hire yonge sone[s] too.
And she was wiff to Alisaundre also,
Cassander dreedyng, in his oppenyoun,
List thei wolde venge [hem] upon his fals tresoun.
- His wife
was called
Thessalonica,
and she had a
son, Antipater,
- Thus euer he lyued in moordre, sorwe & striff; 3032
Bi weie of fraude cam al his ences,
And, as I fynde, how he hadde a wiff,
And she was callid Thesalonices.
And as this stori remembreth dout[e]les, 3036
A sone thei hadde born atween hem tweyne,
To slen his mooder which aftir dede his peyne.
- who compassed
her death be-
cause she
loved his brother
better than she
loved him.
- Shortly [to] passe, myn auctour writ non othir,
Antipater was hir sones name; 3040
And because that she loued his brother
Bettir than hym, he, to his gret diffame,
Compassed hir deth, the stori seith the same,
Natwithstondyng tappese his cruelte 3044
She axed merci knelyng on hir kne.
- With disordered
garments and
face bedewed
with tears, she
begged in vain
for mercy.
- Hir brestes open, white & softe as silk,
Al bedewed with teres hir visage,
Requered meekli at reuerence of the milk 3048
With which he was fostred in yong[e] age,
For taue merci & tappese his rage,
And taccepte goodli hir praieere,
To saue the lyff of his mooder deere. 3052
- He was as
revengeful and
cruel as his
father. No
good branch
springs from
cruel blood.
- But al for nouht; he herde hir neueradeel: [p. 245]
He was to hire, surmountyng al mesure,
Lik his fadir vengable & cruel.
I trowe it was youe hym of nature; 3056

3025. nat] na H. 3027. Roanes H, R 3.

3036. as] om. J—this] the R, H 5. 3046. soft & white H.

3047. hir] off hir R. 3048. at] at the R.

For bi record of kynde & eek scripture,
Seeld or neuer no braunche that is good
Spryngeth of custum out of cruel blood.

Of hir deth[e] cause ther was non other,
That Antipater slouh his mooder deere,
But for she loued Alisaundre his* brother
Bettir than hym, the cronicle doth us lere.
Which Alisaundre, yif ye list to heere,
Hadde in his socour, I fynde be writyng,
Demetrius, that was of Asie kyng.

3060 Alexander,
Antipater's
brother, was
rescued by
Demetrius, an
Asian king;
and after
Lysimachus,
3064

Thesalonices was in this while ded
Bi Antipater, [s]he most infortunat,
Bathed in hir blood, hir sides wer maad red,
Withoute compassioun of hir hih estat.
And hir too sonis lyuyng at debat,
Til Lysymachus, that prefect was of Trace,
Them reconciled ech to othirs grace.

3068 prefect of
Thrace, had
reconciled the
two brothers,

Whan Demetrius knew of ther accord, —
God wot the sothe, he nothyng was fayn;
But bi his fraude, the stori berth record,
That Alisaundre maliciousli was slayn,
This while Antipater stondyng in noun certeyn,
Til he be sleihte of Lysymachus
Was moordred aftir, the stori tellith thus.

3076 Demetrius by
his fraud caused
Alexander to be
slain, and
afterwards
Antipater was
murdered by
Lysimachus.

To write the processe and the maner howh
That Lysimachus bi fraudulent werkyng
His sone in lawe Antipater thus slouh, —
Fals couetise was cause of al this thyng;
And Demetrius took on hym to be kyng
Of Macedoyne, remembrid tyme & date,
Whan bothe brethre wer passed into fate.

3080 Demetrius then
became king of
Macedonia.

Duryng this moordre & al this mortal striff,
In this processe lik as it is founde,
Of Antipater Erudice the wiff,
Douhtir of Seleuchus, was in cheynys bounde,
Cast in prisoun dirk, hidous & profounde;
And for a while I leue hir ther sojourne,
And to Demetrius I will ageyn retourne.

3088 During this
time Eurydice,
Antipater's
wife, was in
prison, where
I'll let her
remain, and
return to
3092 Demetrius,

3058. Seelden R. 3062. his] hir B. 3068. she] he J, R, H.
3078. This] That R — no certeyn R 3, P.
3086. Macedonye R. 3087. into] onto R.

Which made hymself[e] to be crownid kyng
Of Macedoyne, thoruh his gret puissaunce. 3096
But to destroie his purpos in werkyng,
Ther wer thre princis notable in substaunce,
Confederat & of oon alliaunce,
Echon assentid, for short conclusioun, 3100
To brynge Demetrius to destruccioun.

against whom
Ptolemy,
Seleucus,
Lysimachus and
King Pyrrhus
of Epirus
formed a league.

Oon the firste was worthi Tholome,
Kyng of Egipt, in armis ful famous. 3104
Othir tweyne, the stori ye may see,
Callid Seleuchus, & next Lysymachus,
And of Cipre kam the kyng Pirthus,
Lord of [the] prouynce; & as it is eek founde,
Thei made hem strong Demetry to confounde. 3108

They deprived
him of his
kingdom and
put him in
prison, and, so
far as I know,
he never
appeared again.

Shortli to telle, with ther apparailles,
Of Macedoyne thei dede hym first depriue;
Cam upon hym with foure strong batailles,
That he was neuer so ouer-set his lyue: 3112
Take of Lisymachus, the stori doth descryue,
Cheyned in prisoun, of his liff in doute,
For I nat fynde that euer he issued oute.

[Off the too prefectys/ Penestes and Amantas.]¹

Peucestas of
Babylon and
Amyntas of
Bactria

NEXT in ordre Penestes dede appeere, 3116
Whilom prefect of grete Babiloun;
And with hym cam Amyntas* eek ifeere,
Another prefect, as maad is mencion,
Which Bactrie* hadde in his possessioun,* 3120
A gret prouynce youe hym bi iugement,
Mid of Asia toward the occident.

were assigned for
their worthinesse
to watch over
the safety of
Alexander the
Great.

Thes said[e] tweyne, for ther worthynesse 3124
And for ther manhod in actis marcial,
Assigned wern bi dilligent bisynesse
To waite and keepe in especiall

3101. Demetry H.

3106. Cipre] Epirus P — the] om. H — Pirrus P.

3107. &] om. J, P. 3108. Demetrius P.

3116. Peucestes P.

3118. Amyntas] Amantas B, R, J.

3120. Bactrie is spelled Battrie in B, R, H, J, the c formed like t.
— possessioun] suspecioun B, R, J — Bactrie] the Bactrians P.

3123. ther] the R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 recto.

Vpon the mageste in his estat roiall
Of Alisaundre, for trust as chaumbirleyns, 3128
Ageyn thassaut & dreed of al foreyns.

Afftir whos deth, for synguler guerdoun
Made prefectis bothe thei wer in deede,
As ye han herd; the ton in Babilon, 3132
The tother of Bactrie, the stori ye may reede.
Yir in quiete thei myhte hem nat posseede,
For Seleuchus gan a werre ageyn [hem] make,
That thei wer fayn ther lordshipis to forsake. 3136

Made prefects
after his death,
they were
warred on by
Seleucus and
lost their
provinces.

[How Sandrodoctus born of lowe degre cherisshed
robbours & theuys.]¹

OTHER prefectis ther wern also I fynde, [p. 246]
Which heeld the people in ful gret seruage,
In Macedoyne & in outhur Ynde,
Til Sandrodoctus, a man of lough lynage, 3140
Caste he wolde redressen ther outrage,
Of entent poore people to restore
To ther fraunchises, that pleynd on hem sore.*
Sandrodoctus, auctour of this werkyng, 3144
Behihte the people thoruhout al contres,
Whan he be sleichte was c[o]rownid kyng,
Them to restore to ther libertes.
But whan he hadde resceyued thes dignites, 3148
Al his behestis, maad with a fair visage,
Turned, as thei fōd, to thraldam & seruage.
Thus whan a wrech is set in hih estat,
Or a begger brouht up to dignite, 3152
Ther is non so proud[e], pompous nor elat,
Non so vengable nor ful of cruelte,
Void of discrecioun, mercy & pite;
For cherlissh blood seelde doth recure 3156
To be gentil be weie of his nature.

There were
other prefects
who oppressed
the people, and
Sandrodoctus,
a man of low
birth, who
became

king by craft,
promised to
restore them
their freedom.
But he did
not keep his
word.

No one is so
proud and full
of cruelty as a
beggar set in
high estate.

3133. of] in P.

3135. a] om. H, R 3, P, H 5. 3136. lordshipp H.

3137. wer ther also R.

3140. Sandrocottus P. 3143. on he so sore B.

3145. thoruhout] thoruh R—al] be H, of al P.

3146. corownid] crownid MSS. except H 5 corownyd.

3152. up] om. H, R 3. 3156. shurlych H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 verso.

For a time a
churl may feign
gentility, but
like a serpent
under flowers he
will sting in
the end.

He may dissymule & for a tyme feyne,
Countirfete with a fair visage,
Out of oon hood[e] shewe facis tweyne, 3160
Contrari of herte, double of his langage,
Stille of his port, smothe of his passage,
Vnder flour[e]s lik a serpent dare,
Til he may styng; & than he wil nat spare. 3164

Sandrocottus
harassed his
neighbours and
created all
manner of
disturbances.

And euer lik of his condiciouns
Was Sandrodoctus, set up in hih estat;
Vexed peeples, troubled regeouns,
Set cites & touns at gret debat: 3168
Whos gouernaunce was infortunat,
As it was seyn & founde at al[le] preues,
Cherissshed no man but robboours & fals theuys.

He came to
be king through
a marvel.

And to declare how he cauhte hardynesse 3172
And occasioun peeplis to gouerne,
Bi a pronostik, which I shal expresse,
Riht merueilous & vnkouth to discerne,
Which was this, as I shal telle as yerne, 3176
Riht wonderful & vnkouth for to heere;
And it was this, yif ye list to lere:

A poor man of
India called
Pracatales
trespassed
against King
Venandrus, who
sought to
put him to
death.

Ther was a man callid Pracatales,
Born in Ynde, which of his lyuyng 3180
Was wonder poore, cam but seelde in pres,
Because he hadde trespacid in o thyng
Ageyn Venandrus, that was that tyme kyng,
Comaundyng to sleen* hym anon riht; 3184
But he escaped, the stori seith be fliht.

But his swift
feet helped
him to escape,
and while he
slept in his
weariness
beside a well,
a lion came
and licked the
sweat from
his face.

God hadde youe hym of [his] feet suyftnesse,
Bi mene wherof he saued hym fro daungeer,
Thoruh long trauaile fill in werynesse, 3188
And [to] refresshe hym, beside a welle cleer
He lay slepyng, that face & al his cheer
Dropped of soot; a leoun cam forbi,
Likked his face, as seith the stori. 3192

When he
awoke, the
lion went his
way to the
forest without
doing him any
harm.

With which affray the man anon awook,
And sodenli left up his visage;
The leoun ros, sofftli his weie took
Toward the forest, dede hym no damage, 3196

3165. euer] even H. 3170. at] in R. 3171. fals] om. R.
3179. Pracatales P. 3180. of] in H.
3184. sleen] fleen B, R, fien J. 3185. fliht] sleiht R.
3186. his] om. R. 3189. to] om. R. 3193. awook] he woke R.

Forȝat his felnesse and his cruel rage.
Of which pronostik gan thoccasioun
Wherof Sandrodoctus took an oppynyoun,

Caste and thouhte in his fantasie,
Sithe that the leoun is beeste most roiall,
Which nat disdeyned hymselff[e] to applie
To likke the face of a man rurall,
In his nature to shewe hym bestiall,—
He dempte as weel that it was sitting
To take on hym thestat to be a kyng.

His oppynyoun of resoun was riht nouht;
For wher the leoun lefft his cruelte,
He in contrary wex proud in hert & thouht,
Void of merci, bareyn of pite.
For whan that he was set in dignite,
Brouht from a wrech to domynacioun,
Ageyn nature he played the leoun.

Sumwhile* a leoun forgeteth his* felnesse,
Wher-as the wolff wil natureli deuoure;
So roial blood hath routhe, of gentillesse,
On poore pleyntiffs to helpe hem & socoure,
Wher-as a tiraunt of nature doth laboure,
Whan he hath poweer, cachchyng auauntage
To robbe [his] subiectis & spoille hem be pillage. 3220

Sandrodoctus, thus born of low kynreede, [p. 247]
In hih estat bi Fortune whan he stood,
Gan make hym strong & vengable in deede:
With noumbre of robbours, furious and wood, 3224
Cast hym destroie al the gentil blood
That was in Ynde, & bi his ordynaunce
Slen al ther prefectis that hadde gouernaunce.

And with the comouns whan he was maad strong, 3228
And gan the maner of ther deth deuise,
Lik a fals tiraunt, al-thouh he dede wrong
Ageyn his lordis whan he gan arise,
An olifaunt cam in ful unkouth wise,
Hym obeiede, which was a gret[e] wonder, 3232
Whan ther batailes wer nat ferre assonder.

3200 Sandrocottus
heard this story
and thought
that since a
royal lion could
lick the face of
a rustic,

3204

3208 there was no
reason why he,
another poor
man, should not
become king.
Only instead of
being merciful
and gentle, he
was proud and
cruel.

3212

3216 Sometimes a
lion forgets to
be fierce, but
wolves and
tyrants are
always
ravenous.

3224 Sandrocottus
became strong
with the help
of robbers and
the common
people,

and, riding on
a wild elephant,
that, strange
to say,
obeyed him like
a tame beast,

3232

3198. began H. 3205. as] om. J.

3210. & bareyn H, R 3.

3214. Sumwhile] Sumtyme B, R — his] al B, J, P, as R.

3216. of] on R, J, H, P, & R 3. 3223. vengeably H.

3231. gan] did H. 3232. unkouth] humble H.

slew all the
prefects and
gentle blood
of India.

Thouh he was wilde, the stori seith the same,
Sandrodoctus leep upon his side, 3236
And on his bak, as on a beeste tame,
Toward the bataile anon he gan to ride,
Was ther capteyn that day & ther guide,
With his robbours, as it is maad[e] mynde, 3240
Slouh al the prefectis & gentil blood of Ynde.

[How Seleuchus the mighty prince was slayn bi
the grete Tholome kyng of Egipt.]¹

After
Sandrocottus,
Seleucus, son
of Antiochus,
appeared
complaining to
Bochas. He
was a favourite
of Alexander
and son of
Queen Laodice,

THAN cam Seleuchus to Bochas compleinyng,
A mihti prince & a ful manli kniht,
Sone of Antiochus, the grete famous kyng. 3244
Which* Seleucus, for wisdam & for myht,
Was most fauoured in Alisaundris siht,
Born of a princesse, the cronicle ye may seen,
Cald Laoudice the grete famous queen. 3248

who dreamt
the night she
conceived that
Apollo gave her
a ring

The berthe of hym straunge & merueillous:
For his mooder upon the same niht
That she conceyued drempte & thouhte thus, 3252
As it semed pleykli in hir siht,
Of gret Appollo, the heuenli god most briht,
How she the tyme of hir conceyuyng
Resceyued that niht of gold a riche ryng.

in which
a precious stone
with an anchor
engraved on it
was set. Apollo
commanded her
to give the
ring to the
child;

In which[e] ryng was set a precious stoon, 3256
Youe vnto hir for a gret guerdoun,
Graue with an ankir, hir comaundyng anon,
Afftir the berthe withoute dilacioun,
To yiue the ryng, of hool affeccioun, 3260
To Seleuchus, wherbi in especiall
He sholde excelle in actis marciall.

and next
morning, after
her son
was born,
the ring was
found in her
bed, and she
put it away for
safe keeping.

The same morwe afftir the child was born,
Withynne hir bed was founde a riche ryng, 3264
With al the toknys rehersed heer-tofor,
The anker graue, lik in eueri thyng.
Which that the queen[e] took in hir keepyng,
And of entent[e] for his* auauntage, 3268
Kept it secre til he cam to age.

3236. upon] on H.

3238. anon he gan] he proudly gan H, R 3, H 5.

3245, 46 are transposed in B and R.

3245. Which] With B, J, For R.

3263. the] this H. 3268. his] hir B, H, J, R 3, H 5, her P.

3269. to] till H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 100 recto.

Anothir merueile befill also withall:

This [childe] Seleuchus (which was a wonder thyng)

Hadde enpreentid eek in especiall

Vpon his thih an anker & a ryng;

So hadde all, bi record of writyng,

Such carectis, the stori doth termyne,*

That aftir hym wer bor[e]n of that lyne.

Another marvel
was that an
anchor and a
ring were
imprinted on
Seleucus'
thigh.

3272

3276

Whan Seleuchus, as maad is mencionn,

The tendre yeeres hadde of his age ronne,

And cam to yeeris of discrecioun,

He bi this ryng ful many lond hath wonne.

Whos knihtli fame shon sheene as [a] sonne,

He weel auised, hardi [&] of gret myht,

Tyme of Alisandre holde oon the beste kniht.

When he be-
came of age he
won many lands
with the help
of this ring

3280

In werre and armes he his tyme hath spent;

Brouht al Ynde [on]to subieccioun,

Gat al the kyngdames nih of the orient,

Heeld hem longe in his pocioun.

But heer, alas, Bochas makth mencionn,

Al his victories, that dede in honour shyne,

With sodeyn chaung wer turned to ruine.

3284 and conquered
India and
many
kingdoms
of the Orient.

3288

For whan Seleuchus was most victorious,

Hadde al Inde conquered in substaunce,

Atween hym & kyng Lysymachus,

Of whom tofore is maad[e] remembraunce,

Began a werre & a gret distaunce.

And as thei mette with ther apparailles,

In a gret feeld ordeyned ther batailles,

3292 But a sudden
change turned
all to ruin,
when he went
to war against
Lysimachus.

3296

On Lysymachus fill the disconfiture.

Wheroff Seleuchus, glad in especiall,

Dempte his wynnyng cam nat of nature,

But bynfluence verray celestiaall,—

Gan wexe proud in his estat roiall,

Nat supposyng in his victorious stall,

Of his myscheuys that sholde aftir fall.

3300 He was
victorious at
first, and
thought in his
pride that no
one could
defeat him,

3304

3271. childe] *om.* R, P.

3275. termyne] *determyne* B, R, P.

3278. age ronne] *yers* Ironne H.

3281. a] *om.* R, J, P, be R 3.

3282. &] *om.* R, J, P, R 3. 3285. unto] to R, P.

3289. that] *be* H. 3290. to] onto R.

3300. nature] *aventur* H, *auenture* P, H 5, *auentur* R 3.

and yet he was
soon afterwards
slain by
Ptolemy,
Lysimachus'
brother-in-law.

For as the processe declareth onto vs, [p. 248]

How of Egipt the grete Tholome,
Brother-in-lawe to Lysymachus,
Fill on Seleuchus bi ful gret cruelte, 3308
Slouh hym at myscheeff, the stori ye may see.
Loste his liff, as maad is menciouñ,
In Macedoyne, the myhti regioun.

Ptolemy was
one of the
heirs of
Alexander and
the founder of
the Ptolemaic
dynasty.

And it is knowe of antiquite 3312
Bi rehersaile of these olde auctours,
That this forseid gret[e] Tholome
Was Talisaundre oon of thenheritours,
Kyng of Egipt, ther regnyng in his flours. 3316
Afftir whos name, descendyng doun be grees,
Wer alle the kynges callid Tholomes.

He had three
children,
Ceraunus,
Philadelphus
and Arsinoe.

As I fynde, touchyng his lynage,
Bi procreacioun he hadde childe thre: 3320
The firste of hem, to speke in pleyn langage,
Inamed was Ceramyus Tholome,
Next Philadelphus, a douhtir Arcynoe,
That weddid was birfadres consentyng 3324
To Lysymachus of Macedoyne kyng.

[How the too sonys of queen Arcynoe were bi ther
moders brother traitoursly slayn and she exiled.] ¹

Arsinoe then
came before
Bochas, her
face wet with
tears, com-
plaining her
sorrows.

AND thus remembred in bookes [that been] olde,
Deth of Seleuchus wrouht bi Tholome,
Vnwarli slayn, toforn as I haue told, 3328
Next in ordre cam Arsynoe
To Iohn Bochas bi gret aduersite,
Al with teres bedewed hir visage,
And gan compleyne the constreynt of hir rage. 3332

She had two
sons, Lysimachus
and Philip.

This mihti queen, this said Arsynoe,
Hadde sonis tweyne ful famous of renoun:
The ton Lysymachus, excellyng of beute,
The tothir Phelipp, as maad is menciouñ. 3336
And al hir ioie and delectacioun,
Hir worldli blisse — ther is no mor to seyne —
Was hooli set upon thes childe tweyne.

3320. children R.

3322. Cytomyus H.

3326. thus] om. H, R 3 — in] bi R — that been] om. R, J, P, H 5.

MS. J. leaf 101 recto.

- For bi thoccasioun of ther gret fairnesse,
 Men delited gretli them to see,
 Namli women, the stori doth expresse;
 And ther mooder, this queen Arsynoe,
 Stood in gret hope that thei sholde bee
 Mihti kyngis bi iust successioun,
 In Macedoyne the myhti regioun,
 Onli be title of ther fadres riht.
 Which to hir herte gaf ful gret gladnesse,
 For she dempte that non other wiht
 To succede sholde ha[ue] non interesse;
 But Fortune, the blynde fals goddessse,
 Disposed so for thes* childre tweyne,
 That non of them ther purpos sholde atteyne.
- For whan ther fader Lisymachus was slayn,
 The saide queen callid Arsynoe,
 To saue hir lyff koude non othir gayn,
 But with hir sonis feerfulli to flee
 Into Cassandre, a myhti strong cite,
 Onli for dreed of oon Antigonus
 Which them pursued, the stori tellith us.*
- But the brother of queen Arsynoe,
 Callid Ceramius rescued hir partie
 Geyn Antigonus, ye may the stori see;
 Yit in his herte he hadde gret envie,
 Al-be that thei wer nih of his allie,
 That hire too sonis sholde kyngis bee
 Of Macedoyne, & fegne in that contre.
- For he was set onli of couetise
 To be crowned in Macedoyne kyng;
 And of fals* tresoun, the stori doth deuise,
 Them to deceyue, this was his werkyng:
 First to the queen ful humbeli knelyng
 He made promys vnder gret surete,
 In Macedoyne she sholde crownid be.
- And hir childre, so fair of ther visage,
 Sholde be keped* vndir gouernaunce
 Vnto tyme that thei kam to age.
- 3340 whom she hoped would succeed to the throne of Macedonia,
 3344
 3348 taking great pleasure in the thought.
 3352
 3356 But when their father was killed, Arsinoe fled with her two sons from one Antigonus, who pursued them to Cassandreia,
 3360 where they were rescued by Ceraunus,
 3364
 3368 who resolved to be king of Macedon himself, and slyly promised Arsinoe that she should be crowned queen,
 3372
 3376 advising her to keep her children in tutelage until they became of age.
3346. the] bat H. 3350. enteresse R. 3351. the] bat H.
 3352. thes] ther B, R. 3357. ferfull H. 3358. Cassandria P.
 3360. us] thus B, R, J, R 3. 3362. Ceraunus P — hir] his H.
 3363. be story ye may H. 3370. fals] his fals B, R, J.
 3374. she] he R. 3376. keped] kept B.

And for to put hir in mor assuraunce,
 Ceramyus swoor (God yiue hym sori chaunce!)
 He purposed, for al his fals werkynge, 3380
 To crowne hir queen & make hir sones kynges.

He swore before
 all the gods
 that he would
 marry her and
 make her his
 queen,

Took alle the goddis ther onto witnesse
 And swoor ageyn[e], with a pleyn visage,
 Onto the quen, of fraude & doubilnesse, 3384
 His purpos was to haue hir in mariage,
 Crowne hir queen to hir gret auauntage.
 Thus was he* sworn, althouh he was hir brother;
 Yit in herte God wot he thouhte another. 3388

and thus assured,
 she allowed
 him to enter
 the city, and
 met him with
 great ceremony.

Vnder colour of this assuraunce [p. 249]
 She leet hym entre Cassandre the cite,
 Cam ageyn hym to doon hym mor plesaunce
 With al hir lordis of hih & louh degre, 3392
 Made the streetis hangid for to bee
 With clothes of gold, & in solempne wise
 To alle ther godis dede sacrefise.

Her two sons
 wore royal
 crowns and
 went before
 her down the
 principal street
 to receive their
 uncle;

And thus he was resceyued solempneli;
 The day was halwed & holde festyual:
 The queen for ioie ordeyned richeli
 Hir too sonis, that were so faire in al,
 To be crownid with crownes ful roiall, 3400
 Goon afforn hire in the maister streete
 Gloriousli ther vnkle for to meete.

and with
 a friendly face
 he embraced
 them, although
 purposing their
 destruction.

With felenous herte vnder a freendli face
 This Ceramyus, roote of al tresoun,
 Gan his cosyns benigneli enbrace, 3404
 Hym purposyng bi fals collusion.
 To proceede to ther destruccioun.
 And fynali, firste he dide his peyne 3408
 The queen textile and slen hir childre tweyne.

He ordered the
 queen to be
 exiled, meaning
 to murder her
 sons; but she
 saw what he
 intended and
 begged him
 to be
 merciful,

But or this tresoun was brouht to a preeff,
 Whan the queen apparceyued his falsnesse
 And sauh hir sonis brouht to such myscheeff, 3412
 She coniured hym in hir mortal distresse
 To haue pite of natural gentillesse,
 Spare his cosyns, afforn hym wher thei stood,
 Of roial merci, so nih born of his blood. 3416

3387. was he] he was B, R, J, R 3, H 5, P.

3396. solely R. 3411. apparceyued] parceyued H.

And with a cri passyng lamentable
 She fill afforn hym swownyng onto grounde,
 Lik as she hadde be verraili coupable,
 Seyng hir sonis bleedyng *with* many wounde.
 But al for nouht; ther was no merci founde.
 For *with** ther blood (this stori is nat feyned)
 Hir garnement was doolfulli disteyned.

and fell to the
 ground in a
 swoon before
 him.

3420

Hir faire face was soiled with ordure,
 Hir goldene her was al to-torn & rent,
 And lik a thrall this woful creature
 With mortal weepyng hadde hir sihte blent.
 And aftir that, I fynde how she was sent
 To burie hir childre, for ther was no space,
 Into an ile callid *Sammotrace*.

3424 But all without
 avail. The
 blood of her
 sons stained
 her garments,
 her golden hair
 was torn, and
 she went blind
 for weeping.

3428

Is any stori, whiche maketh mencioun
 That a princesse of so hih degre
 Fond so gret cause of lamentacioun?
 She beyng douhtir to gret Tholome, —
 Hir childre slayn be vengable cruelte,
 And to beholde the deth most dolerous
 Of hir husbonde callid *Lysymachus*.

3432 She buried her
 sons in
 Samothrace.
 Is there any
 story of a
 princess of
 such high
 degree who
 suffered so
 much?

3436

She aftir banished in exil made hir eende,
With sorewful compleynt hir lyff thus drawe along,
 Til into fate hir sperit dede weende,
 It is no dreded hir peynes wer ful strong.
 And yif I sholde rehersen al the wrong
 That she suffred, it sholde greeue sore,
 Therfor of hir now I write no more.

3440 Afterwards she
 died in exile.
 It would be
 too painful to
 rehearse all
 her wrongs.

3444

Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie sheweth an apparence
 And a liknesse of feithful assuravnce,
 Texite men to yiue fals credence
 Vnto Fortunys froward variaunce.
 Which cast hir baitis & anglis of plesaunce,
 An hook hid vndir of vengable cruelte,
 As this chapitle [hath] put in remembraunce
 Of *Lysymachus* & of *Arsynoe*.

This tragedy
 has to do with
 the variance of
 Fortune.

3448

3452

3420. many a H. 3422. with] which B. 3423. garment H.
 3431. whiche] which pat H, R 3. 3437. callid] om. R.
 3438. banished H, R.
 3447. Texite] execute H. 3451. hath] om. R.

There is no
greater evidence
of worldly
vicissitudes than
to see princes
suddenly
brought to ruin.

Is ther any gretter euidence
Of worldli trouble of worldli constaunce,
Than seen princis from ther magnificence
And from ther myhti roial [hih] puissaunce 3456
Vnwarli brouht bi Fortune to myschaunce,
And ouerwhelmyd from ther tranquillite?
Seep heer a merour ful notable in substaunce
Of Lysymachus & queen Arsinoe. 3460

The ring and
anchor
given to
Seleucus by
Apollo were
of small
assurance; and
think of
Lysimachus and
Arsinoe!

The ryng, the anker of gret excellence
Youe to Seleuchus for marcial suffisaunce,
Whan Appollo be heuenli influence 3464
List with his mooder make his alliaunce,
Sent hym thes reliques of synguler aqueyntaunce,
To sette his manhod in mor surete;
But in al such quaueryng perseueraunce,*
Thynk on Lysymachus & on Arsinoe! 3468

Neither the
vast treasures
nor the subjects
nor the
regions of those
who govern
this world
render them
secure against
Fortune.

The vnkout[h] tresours, the gold nor the dis-
pence [p. 250]
Of hem that han this world in gouernaunce,
Nor al the subiectes, up rekned in sentence,
Nor al the regiouns vnder ther obeissaunce, 3472
Princis, princessis, with al ther attendaunce,
May ageyn Fortune yiue hem no liberte;
Who nat knoweth hir vnseur geri chaunce,
Thynk on Lysymacus & on Arsinoe. 3476

Arsinoe and her
children were
slain by
Ceraunus (bad
luck to him!)
who pretended
friendship for
them.

Hir childre and she slayn bi violence
Of Ceramyus (God yiue hym sori chaunce!)
That bi fals colour dide hir reueresce
And pretendid a maner obseruaunce, 3480
The tresoun cloos of venymous purueiaunce,
Purposed afforn toutraie hem all[e] thre:
The childre slayn, which knewe no cheuisaunce,
The mooder exiled, callid Arsinoe. 3484

Noble Princes,
do not become
estranged from
one another or
hide your
rancour under a
curtain of
duplicity.
Remember this
chapter of
Lysimachus
and Arsinoe.

Noble Princis, beeth war of hih prudence,
Among your-silf that ther be no distaunce,
Hideth no rancour of hatful violence
Vndir a courtyn of double daliaunce; 3488
Lik your herte shewe out your contenaunce,
Void of dissymulyng &* duplicite,

3456. hih] *om.* R. 3460. queen] of R. 3464. make his]
maken H. 3467. perseueraunce] aqueyntaunce B, R, J.
3468. 2nd on] off R, *om.* J. 3472. ther] *om.* R.
3476. 2nd on] *om.* J, P. 3490. &] & of B.

Wisly weieth this chapitle in balaunce,
Off Lisymachus and queen Arsynoe.

3492

¶ Explicit.

[How Ceramius of Macedony kyng that moordred
his cosyns was slayn in bataile bi them [of]
Fraunce.]¹

THE noble poete Iohn Bochas, in his book
Procedyng foorth, compleyneth of pite,
With quaky[n]g hand whan he his penne took
And gan to write the woful destyne,
As ye han herd, of queen Arsynoe,
And how Ceramius, the stori maketh mynde,
Was to hir fals, traitour & vnkynde.

As John
Bochas
proceeded forth
in his book,
his hand
trembled
when he
wrote the sad
story of Queen
Arsinoe.

3496

Of whos tresoun is maad a gret processe,
And how he aftir was slayn in bataille,
Punshed bi vengauce for his gret falsnesse,
Lik as his stori maketh rehersaille.
Which to remembre I cast me nat to faille,
Folwyng myn auctour & proceede in writyng,
How Ceramyus was slayn whan he was kyng.

3500 Ceraunus was
afterwards
slain in battle

3504

For whil that he bi his fals werkyng,
In Macedoyne hadde gouernaile,
Thre hundred thousand acountid be reknyng*
Wente out of Fraunce to conquere in Itaille;
The hoost, departed in many strong bataille,
Gat bi conquest thoruh ther hih renoun
Ful many prouynce & many regioun.

3508 by the Gauls,
after they had
conquered
Italy

3512

And as thei rood thoruh many gret contre, —
This peple of Gaule in steel armyd cleen,* —
Thei foundid castellis & many strong cite:
Toward Rome thei bilt Milan & Sene,
Vpon T[h]alpies ther armour shon ful sheene;
And sum of them up to Rome wente
Be verray force, and the cite brente.

3516 and built
Milan and
Sienna.
Their armour
gleamed on
the Alps; and
some of them
burnt Rome,
and others
went up the
Ægean Sea to
Pavonia.

3520

3509. reknyng] writyng B, R, J, P.

3510. in] om. R. 3514. contrees H.

3515. cleen] briht B, sheene R, J.

3516. Citees H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 recto.

Summe partid up to the Grekissh Se,
 Hadde a custum to chese ther duellyng place
 Bi augurie, as briddes dede flee;
 Folwyng ther fliht[e], thei gan aftir trace, 3524
 Holdyng ther way, *withynne* a litil space,
 With myhti hand, the book doth specefie,
 Thei cam tacontre callid Pauonye.

They were a
 people of great
 courage, and,
 following
 Hercules'
 example,

This folk of Gaule, which is callid France, 3528
 To conquere londis put hemsilff in pres,
 As most notable peeple of puissaunce,
 Folwyng thexample of ther knihtli ences
 In ther ridyng, of worthi Hercules, 3532
 Which was worsheped in actis marcial
 Lik as a god, and callid immortal.

they conquered
 many countries.
 When they
 came to
 Macedonia,

Thoruh grace of Fortune in ther cheualries
 Conquered contres, alway foorth ridyng, 3536
 Themsilff departyng in dyuers cumpanyes, —
 Who them withstood thei consumed be brennyng.
 Cam to Macedoyne wher Cerawm was kyng;
 Of presumpcioun weenyng it sholde auaille, 3540
 Out of ordynaunce he mette hem in bataile.

Ceraunus
 fought them
 in his pride,
 although they
 offered to treat
 with him for
 peace.

This Ceramius of outrage & of pride
 Dempthe hym able to meete *with* hem of France;
 But for he was thoruh moordre an homycide, 3544
 He lakked grace & poweer in substaunce.
 Yit thei off Gaule, bi prudent *gouvernaunce*,
 Offred onto hym, thouh he was rek[e]les,
 With Macedonoys for to trete of pes. 3548

Defeated for
 his presumption
 his head was
 cut off and
 set on a stake.

But of* presumpcioun & malencolie [p. 251]
 Ageyn his enmyes he the feeld hath take,
 And disconfited anon was his partie:
 His men gan fleen, & ha[ue] ther lord forsake; 3552
 His hed smet off and set upon a stake.
 But al his myscheeff was to lite in deede
 To recompense his fraude & his falsheede.

But there is no
 punishment
 adequate for
 murder.

Ther is no payne ageyn so gret offense 3556
 Mai be deuised in no book that men reede,
 Equivalent moordre to recompense,

3521. to] thoruh H, R 3, through H 5.

3523, 24. are transposed in B; correction indicated by scribe.

3534. Immortal H. 3538. thei] the R — be] with H, H 5.

3539. Ceraunus P. 3544. an] & R.

3549. of] for B, J, R. 3558. Equyuallence R.

Duli to punshe so outraious a deede,
 Of hym that made yonge childre bleede, 3560
 As dede Ceraum, which of fals couetise
 His cosyns slouh, as ye han herd deuise.

To thynke on moordre, it is to foul a thyng,
 To God and man hatful & terrible: 3564
 The infernal fraude, the deuellissh compassyng
 To ech creature of nature is odible,
 Which to redresse is an impossible.
 O cursid Ceram, I leue thi stori heere, 3568
 Thi name no more shal blotte my papeere!

It is too
 foul a thing,
 hateful and
 terrible to God
 and man.
 Cursed
 Ceraunus,
 your name shall
 no longer blot
 my paper!

[How the prynce Belgius was disconfited and
 brouht vnto nought.]¹

A FFTIR this tiraunt, as ye ha[ue] herd be cas,
 Slayn in bataile, this traitour odious,
 Anon in ordre cam to Iohn Bochas 3572
 A myhti prince callid Belgius,
 Dedli pale, with face furious,
 Which compleynynd, among this woful pres,
 His disconfiture doon be duk* Sostenes. 3576

After
 Ceraunus, a
 prince called
 Belgius
 appeared,
 complaining
 with a furious
 and distorted
 face his
 disconfiture
 by Duke
 Sosthenes.

This sodeyn myscheef greued his herte sore;
 For al the folk that wer in his bataille
 Wer put to fliht[e]. Bochas writ no more
 Of his knihthod nor of his apparaille, 3580
 Sauf onli this; he maketh rehersaille,
 Of the Frensshe hōst, he tellith in certeyn,
 How he was chose for a cheeff capteyn,

His sudden
 misfortune
 grieved him
 sorely. Bochas
 says no more
 about him
 than that
 he was chosen
 a chief captain
 of the French
 army; nor do
 I find any other
 notice of
 Sosthenes,
 3584 save that he
 was conquered
 by Brennus.

And how he cam into the riche lond
 Of Macedoyne with his peeple of Fraunce,
 Til Sostenes the duk, with myhti hond,
 Discounfited hym, brouht hym to myschaunce.
 Of whom I fynde non other remembraunce, 3588
 Saue whan he wende ta be* most glorious,
 He was outraied bi force of Brennyus.

3562. han] *om.* R. 3567. Inpossible R.

3576. duk] queen B, R — Sosthenes P.

3585. his] this H, R 3.

3589. ta be] taue be B, R 3, H 5, tauethe R, to haue ben P, taue
 ben J.

3590. Brennus P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 verso.

[How Duk Brennyus delityng to robbe & spoile ended.]¹

Brennus, king of Sens, was a conqueror who spared neither peoples nor gods, robbing all.

THIS Brennyus, ful knihtli in werkyng,
Which bi conquest gat many gret cite, 3592
And, as I reede, of Sens he was kyng,
Dispoilled regiouns & many gret contre,
Robbed peeples of hih & low degre,
Spared no goddis, but be violence 3596
Took ther tresours; dede hem no reuerence.

The Greeks used to go to the temple of Apollo at Delphi to consult the oracle,

Ther was a temple gret and merueilous
Bilt on a roche and on an hill off ston,
Sacred Tappollo callid Delphicus, — 3600
In al Grece so gret a god was non.
And offte sithe the peple wolde gon
Vp to a theatre which that stood withoute,
To haue ansuere of that thei stood in doute. 3604

where they had answer given them by a spirit of false deception.

Ther trust, ther hope was to that god applied,
Hauyng to hym synguler affecciouⁿ,
As thouth he myhte haue holpe & magnefied
And doon to hem gret consolacioun;
For bi a sperit of fals decepcioun 3608
He gaff answeere of sondri questiouns
To folk that cam fro dyuers regiouns.

Brennus had no desire to worship the gods of Greece; he only wanted to rob them of their treasures.

Kyng Brennyus hadde no fantasie, 3612
In ther templis aftir ther paynym guise
Nouthur to worshepe nor to magnefie
Ther Grekissh goddis, to doon hem sacrefise;
For in his herte he gan hem to despise, 3616
Cauhte a ioie with al his fals robbours
Them to despoile & robbe of ther tresours.

He promised to share the pillage with his men

Behihte his men, & seid in pleyn langage,
That his desir and his entenciouⁿ 3620
Was to be boti with them of such pillage
As goddis hadde in ther pocessioun,
And parte with hem for synguler guerdoun

3592. cite] cure R.

3593. Sens] Dens R, dens J — of Sens] since P — was] was made H, P.

3594, 95 are transposed in H. 3595. peep^{le} J, people P.

3596. be] om. R

3618. ther] the R.

3621. boti] bootyng R 3, botyng H 5, boting P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 102 verso.

For ther labour & ther gret trauailles
That thei had hadde with hym in his batailles.

3624

He gaff his peeple a maner hardynesse,
Made hem truste in gret multitude,
Hauyng despiht of thynnocent symplesse
Of his enmyes, because thei wer but rude.
I meene tho folk, shortli to conclude,
Which hadde in keepyng the ieweles precious
Of gret Appollo callid Delphicus.

3628

and taught his
people to trust
in numbers, and
despised the
Delphian
priests because
they were rude
and simple.

3632

The peeple also which was with Brennyus [p. 252]
Hadde al the day dronke myhti wyne —
To fille ther paunchis thei wer so desirous, —
That thei forgat ther marcial doctrynes.
Tascende the mounteyn feeble wer ther chynes,
Ther hedis toltir & ther brayn gan faille,
The temple alofte to spoille it or tassaille.

[p. 252]

3636

Brennus'
soldiers
were drunk,
and feeble to
climb the hill
and assault the
temple;

In ther ascendyng be weies that thei ches,
Vpon the roche thei wer bete down;
Preestis of the temple put hemsilff in pres —
Oon bar a standard, a-nother a gret penoun —
Clad in chesiples for hih deuocioun,
And with ther other vnkouth apparailles,
Bothe on the roche & lowe in ther batailles.

3640

and the priests,
clad in
chasubles,
fought them
bravely

3644

The peeple of Brennyus* was incomparable,
Spradde al the feeldis, the stori berth wnesse;
But it is said of old & is no fable,
That no diffence is [in] dronk[e]nesse.
And wisdam failleth wher is gret excesse;
And in a feeld[e], pleynli to conclude,
Victori alway stant nat in multitude.

3648

in spite of their
great numbers;

3652

For thei wer set, Bochas doth deuise,
Nat to knihthod but to fals outrage,
To spoile and robbe be gredi couetise,
And stufte ther someres with outraious pillage;
Furious raayne hath brouht hem in a rage, —
And farweel knihthod & marcial noblesse
Wher couetise is ladi & maistresse!

3656

for they were
set not on
knightly deeds
but on robbery.

3660

3637. wer] was H.

3638. toltir J, R, toltir H 5, toltir (*the r misformed*) H — brayns
H, braynes R 3 — ganto R.

3643. another] ano H. 3647. Bremnyus B.

3651. wher] ther H. 3652. feeld] freende R.

3657. someres] om. R.

Besides
Brennus the
Gauls had
two other
leaders, Dukes
Euridanus and
Thessalonus.

Too myhti dukis wer with Brennyus,
Which that wer[en] cheeff of his counsail.
Manus* the ton, the tothir Thesalorus,
Which, as thei thouhte to ther gret auail, 3664
Began a purpos, and it was disauail,
To robbe the temple, the contre & ech toun,
Which turnid aftir to ther confusioun.

Avarice
strangles
the prowess of
many a worthy
knight and
turns nobility
of heart into
cowardice.

Thus auarice with stomak vnstaunchable 3668
Hath stranglid the prowess* of many worthi kniht;
And couetise, hir sustir vntretable,
Hath of hih noblesse ful ofte queynt the liht.
Wher Tantalus regneth, a leoun hath no myht: 3672
This to meene, hunger & couetise
Turneþ al noblesse into cowardise.

For bi the counsail of these dukes tweyne,
Brennyus sette al his oppynyoun; 3676
To spoille & robbe dede his besi peyne,
To pile the cites of al that regeoun.
But in this while, as maad is menciouun,
Mid ther batailles, Bochas doth me lere, 3680
The god Appollo & Pallas dede appeere.

In the midst
of the fight
Appollo appeared,
young and
lusty, armed
all in gold, and
Diana, with
her keen
arrows, and
Minerva in a
glittering
habergeon.

Appollo first shewed his presence,
Fressh, yong and lusti as any sonne sheene,
Armed al in gold, and with gret violence 3684
Entred the feeld[e], as it was weel seene.
And Diana kam with hir arwes keene,
And Mynerua in a briht haberiouun,
Which in ther komyng made a terrible soun. 3688

The noise of
their bright
armour terrified
the Gauls, and
there was a
hideous earth-
quake and hail
storm.

The noise was herd[e] of ther briht armure,
Which made ther enmyes for feer almost to raue,
That thei myht afforn hem nat endure,
Fledde the feeld for dreed, themsilf to saue. 3692
And ther was herd an hidous erthe-quaue;
And fro heuene in this mortal bataille,
Of cold constreynyng gret stonys gan doun haille.

Brennus,
mortally
wounded, drove
a dagger into
his heart,

Ther aduersaries bete doun & groundid, 3696
And afforn hem durste nat abide.
And Brennyus so mortalli was woundid,

3663. Manus] EManus B, Emanvs R, Euridanus P — Thessa-
lonus P.

3669. prowess] poweer B, R. 3673. &] of H.

3688. Which] The which R.

3694. from H. 3695. doun] to H.

Bothe brest & hed, & hurt thoruh outhur side, —

Loo, heer the eende of couetise & pride:

3700

For Brennyus for constreynt of his smerte

Rooff with a dagger hymselfen to the herte.

This was his eende, vengable & merueilous;

And his dukis slay[e]n bothe tweyne,

3704

Callid Emanus & Thesalorus,

The Grekissh goddis gan at hym so disdeyne.

Of sacrilege seeth heer the greuous peyne:

For who to goddis list do non obseruaunce,

3708

Shal vnwarli be punished with vengauce.

It is nat holsum with goddis [for] to pleie,

Nor ther puissaunce presumptuousli tattame;

For wher-as thei be vengauce list werreie,

3712

Who list assay shal fynde it no game.

For his presumpcioun Brennyus fond the same;

For Appollo, Diane and Mynerue

For his outrage vnwarli made hym sterue.

3716

and both his
captains were
slain. The
gods of the
Greeks would
allow no
sacrilege.

It is not
wise to trifle
with the gods.

Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie declareth, who list heerz, [p. 253]

Of duk Brennyus many græt bataile,

His extort conquest, & hooli the maneere

How [he] bi force rood thoruh al Itaille.

Aftir how he the Romeyns dede assaille;

His fall in Grece bi vengable violence,

For he to goddis list do no reuerence.

Took al the tresours & ieweles most enteere

Out of ther templis, & richest apparaille,

Gold and perle, & al that stuff ifeere,

To his ences which that myhte auaille.

The riche he robbed, oppressid the poraille,

Of verrai pompe & froward insolence,

And list to goddis do no reuerence.

This myhti tiraunt most surquedous of cheere,

With couetise brent in his entraille,

Whos gredi fret ther myht no mesure steere,

Til that Fortune at myscheeff dede hym faille;

He lakked myht hir variaunt wheel to naille.

This tragedy
tells of battles
fought by
Brennus, and
how he fell
in Greece
because he
had no respect
for the gods.

He robbed
the temples of
their treasures,
and all men;

and no measure
could restrain
his greed, until
Fortune threw
him from her
wheel.

3703. his] the R.

3705. Emanvs H, Euridanus P — Thesaleus H, Thessalonus P.

3710. for] om. R, J, P. 3720. he] om. J.

Ageyns whos fall ther was no resistance,
For he [to] goddis list do no reuerence. 3736

Noble Princes,
virtue is
stronger than
plate and
mail; and the
chief protection
of your
magnificence is
to do due
reverence to
God.

Noble Princis, conceyueth & dooth lere
The fall of Brennyus for mys gouernaille,
And prudentli peisying this mateere, 3740
Vertu is strenger than outhere plate or maille.
Afforn considred what Salamon* doth counsaile,
Cheef preseruatiuff of your magnificence,
Is first to God to do due reuerence. 3744

[How Pirrus kyng of pirothe listnat lyue in pees but
of pride and presumpcioun in werre, cam to
myschaunce.]¹

Next appeared
young
Pyrrhus, son
of Eacides, born
to reign in
Epirus.

IN Bochas book next folwyng on þe ryng
Cam yong[e] Pirrus, sone of Eacides,
Born be discent to regnen & be kyng
And tenherite the lond of Pirothes. 3748
Yit in his youthe & in his tendre ences,
The froward peeple duellyng in that place,
Withoute his gilt, gan his deth purchase.

To preserve
him from his
hostile subjects
he was sent
to Glaucus,
king of Illyria,
whose wife was
Berenice,

But to preserue hym, as maad is mencionn,
He was commyttid & taken in keepyng 3752
Certeyn yeeris for his sauacioun
To oon Glaucus of Illirie kyng,
Whos wiff was cosyn, be record of writyng, 3756
To the seid[e] famous Eacides,
And she in stori callid Beronices.

born of his own
line.

He nih of blood[e] to this noble queen,
Bothe tweyne born of o lynage, 3760
Wonder gracious to alle that dede hym seen
And weel fauoured of fetures & visage.
And in the while of his tendre age,
Oon Cassander, off Macedoyne kyng, 3764
Compassid his deth bi sotil fals werkynge.

Yet while he
was still young,
Cassander
plotted his
death and
sent for him,
threatening
Glaucus that
unless Pyrrhus
came he would
begin a mortal
war.

And his purpos for to brynge aboute,
He sente for hym bi fals collusioun,
Puttyng Glauchus pleyntli out of doute, 3768
But yiff he cam lich his entencioun,
He wolde werke to his destruccioun,
Gadre peeple bothe nih & ferre
And on Glauchus gynne a mortal werre. 3772

3737. to] om. R. 3742. Salamon] Brennyus B, J, R.
3757. the is repeated in H. 3766. his] this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 103 verso.

But king Glaucus took therof* non heede,
 Hauyng to Pirrus so gret affecciou:
 Of hym resceyued verraili in deede
 To been his sone bi adopcioun,
 Purposyng of hool entencioun
 To make Pirrus, pleyntli yiff he may,
 To been his hair & regne aftir his day.

But Glaucus
 paid no atten-
 tion to him,
 and purposed
 to make
 Pyrrhus his
 heir;

3776

Pirrus alway up growyng bi ences,
 Ful amyable bothe of cheer & face;
 And in this while the peeples of Pirothes,
 Knowyng that he stood in Glaucus grace,
 Chaunged ther hertis, cast hem in short space
 For to restore, alle of o corage,
 The said[e] Pirrus to his heritage.

and when
 the people of
 Epirus heard
 that he stood
 in Glaucus'
 favour, they
 restored him
 to his heritage

3784

Thus bi assent he was crowned kyng,
 Yong, fressh & lusti, & semli therwithal,
 Wonder weel thewed in his upgrowyng,
 Lik his lynage of corage wex roiall.
 The which was cause in especiall,
 He was beloued of freendis al aboute,
 And of his enmyes gretli had in doute.

and crowned
 him king.

3788

3792

The name of hym gan to spreede ferre
 Thoruh al Grece aboute in ech contre.
 The lond of Tarente gan in [t]his tyme a werre
 Ageyn[es] the Romeyns, as ye may see,
 Requeryng Pirrus that he wolde bee
 Fauourable & helpyng of entente
 To the parti of them of Tharente.

He was
 beloved of
 his friends and
 feared by his
 enemies; his
 name spread far
 and wide, and
 the Tarentines
 asked him to
 help them
 against Rome.

3796

3800

To ther request he gan condescende,
 And of purpos cast hym nat to faile,
 Yif that Fortune wolde hym grace sende,
 With myhti hand & marcial apparaile
 For to be lord & conquere al Itaille,
 As dide his vncle whilom, dout[e]les,
 Callid Alisaundre kyng of Epirothes.

[p. 254] This he did,
 and aspired to
 the conquest of
 all Italy.

3804

3773. therof] heerof B, R, J, H 5.
 3784. Chaunged] changyng H, R 3, H 5.
 3792. al] om. R.
 3795. ech] his R.
 3796. this] his J, H 5, P — a] om. R, J, P.
 3800. the] be H — 1st of] with H.

First he had
a battle with
a Roman consul
at Heraclea,

First he began his conquest in Itaille 3808
Toward Heraclie, a myhti gret cite,
Wher with Brennyus he hadde a gret bataille,
Consul of Rome & lord of that contre.
And to thencre of his felicite, 3812
As [it] is remembred in historie,
Vpon Romeyns he gat that victorie.

and won by
means of his
elephants with
castles on their
backs.

The olifauntis with castelis on ther bak 3816
Caused Pirrus, the yonge manli knyht,
With his wisdam, in which ther was no lak,
To putte his enmyes that day to the fliht.
And in this while it happed foorth riht,
The Secilians, Bochas berth record, 3820
Among hemsilff[e] wer at gret discord.

At that time
the Sicilians
were at discord
among them-
selves and
asked Pyrrhus
to be their
king.

Ther was atween hem gret dyuisioun,
Ech to other contrarie in werkyng;
But to refourme ther fals discencioun, 3824
Thei preied Pirrus to come & be ther kyng.
To whos request he fulli assentyng,
Bi them maad strong, list nat to differre,
Ageyn the Romeyns to begynne a werre. 3828

He assented,
and,
strengthened by
them, attacked
the Romans at
Naples, where
he was defeated
and ran away.

Beside a castell callid Esculus,
Withynne Poile, his baneres he gan splaie.
The same day, nat happi nor vrous,
Contrarious Fortune his power gan affraie, 3832
Wounded to the deth gan gretli hym dismaye,*
Be which occasioun this Pirrus anon riht
Leep on his courseer & took hym to the fliht.

He made his
son Helenus
king of Sicily

A sone he hadde callid Helenus, 3836
Born of the douhtir of kyng Agothodes,
Whom he ordeyned, myn auctour tellith thus,
For to be crowned, to his gret encre,
On Sicilians to regne ther in pes, 3840
Weenyng therbi taue had auantage.
And in this while cam to hym a massage

3808. gan R.

3809. Heraclie] *om.* H.

3810. Brennyus] Leuinus P — gret] strong H.

3813. it] *om.* R, J, H, P. 3815. bak] bakkis H.

3818. to the] vn to H. 3820. berth] bers H.

3827. strong] *om.* R.

3829. Asculus P. 3833. dismaye] disamaie B.

3837. Agathocles P. 3840. ther to regne H, R 3.

Out of Tharente, which stood in auenture
 For his absence out of that regeoun, —
 Yif he nat cam, thei myhte nat endure
 Ageyn the poweer of them of Rome toun,
 Which of assent* wer descendid doun
 Ageyn[e]s hem, thei stondyng in dispa[i]re,
 Sauff in abidyng upon his repair.

3844 and went to
 Tarentum,
 where the
 people were
 hard pressed
 by the Romans.

Pirrus this while stood in ful hard[e] poynt,
 Wex abasshed & dul in his corage,
 Atwix[e] too hangyng in disioynt:
 Werreied of Romeyns, hatid in Cartage;
 Hadde a bataille to his fynal damage
 Withynne a feeld callid Arusius,
 Ther put to fliht bi oon Fabricius.

3852 Harassed by
 the Romans
 and hated in
 Carthage, he
 was again
 defeated,

Destitut bi fortune & appeired,
 Void of socour, bareyn of richesse,
 Lik a man of hope disespeired,
 Toward Epire in haste he gan hym dresse,
 Wher he was first, his stori doth expresse,
 As ye han herd rehearsed be writyng,
 Bi successioun whilom lord & kyng.

3856 and, returning
 to Epirus in evil
 plight,

But whan he cam to Epire his cite,
 He gan of newe ageyn Antigonus,
 Kyng of Macedoyne, a ful strong contre,
 Hym to werreie he was so desirous.
 And bi conquest, the stori tellith thus,
 Withynne a while, ther was no gret lettyng,
 Bi helpe of Fortune he was crownid kyng.

3864 nevertheless
 began a
 successful war
 against
 Antigonus of
 Macedon and
 was crowned
 king in his
 stead.

Nat seuene monethes regnyng in quiete,
 Bi Lysymachus, maugre al his myht,
 He was put doun & remeued from his seete.
 Yit of presumpcioun, thouh ther was no riht,
 He took on hym to gynne a newe fliht
 Geyn Lacedemoyns, & felli them werreie,
 Onli because thei wolde hym nat obeie.

3872 Seven months
 later he was
 dethroned by
 Lysimachus and
 presumptuously
 attacked the
 Spartans.

Whos presumpcioun whan that thei beheeld,
 Bothe of prudence & of policie
 Women wer armed to make a large feeld,
 With multitude toppressen his partie,

3880 Even the
 women took
 the field against
 him, and his
 son was slain.

3846. the] ther R. 3847. assent] ascent B.

3851. abaissht R. 3855. Arusius] Tarentinus P.

3859. despeired R, J, disepeirid H.

For comoun proffit put hem in iupartie;
 And fynalli such was ther ordenaunce,
 That seid[e] Pirrus was brouht to myschaunce. 3884

Afterwards
 he fought
 the Argives and
 was killed by
 a stone as he
 came to the
 city wall.

His sone ther slayn, callid Tholome, [p. 255]

And many other loste ther her lyues;
 Yit for al that, of pride and cruelte,
 He gan a werre ageyn[e]s the Argyues. 3888
 And at the eende of al his mortal striues,
 For conclusioun, this was his laste fall,
 Slayn with a ston as he cam to ther wall.

His head was
 cut off and
 sent to Antig-
 onus.

His hed smet off in the same place, 3892

And therof made an oblacioun
 To Antigonus for a gret solace.

Thus list Fortune quite his presumpcioun,
 Afftir his werris with many regioun. 3896

Loo, heer the eende of folkis rek[e]les
 That folwed werre & list nat lyue in pes!

[How the tiraunt Aristotyn/ bi trecherous werkyng
 sette a-side the right lyne/ was crowned kyng
 of Epirothes & aftir slayn.]¹

Aristotimus, a
 tyrant, set
 aside the two
 heirs to the
 throne of
 Epirus,

FORTH procedyng, folwyng Iohn Bochas
 I will reherse in ful pleyng langage 3900

How Aristotyn, a tiraunt, this the cas,
 Caste & compassed bi ful gret outrage,
 Hauyng no title of riht nor heritage,
 Of Epirothes bi trecherous werkyng 3904
 Voidyng the lyne, ther to be crownēd kyng.

Pyrrhus and
 Ptolemy, and
 became king
 himself.

Lyuyng too childre, the stori tellith thus,
 Born bi discent to regne in that cite,
 Theldest of them callid was Pirrus 3908

And the second named Tholome;
 And bothe tweyne bi the cruelte
 Of Aristotyn wer falsli set aside,
 He maad[e] kyng, this tiraunt, thoruh his pride. 3912

Like a tyrant
 he slew and
 exiled all the
 notables

And whil that he thus gan occupie,
 Lik a tiraunt cruel & vengable,
 Of fals[e] rancour and malencolie

3885. R omits to line 484 of Book V. 3886. loste] lefft H.

3896. many a H.

3901. Aristotimus P. 3910. the] om. H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 104 recto.

Slouh al the citeseyns that wer most notable, 3916
 And exilid, this stori is no fable,
 Onli of malis withynne his herte cloos,
 Al that wer contrary vnto his purpos.

Vnto the women bi fraudulent sentence 3920
 He made ordeyne, aftir that anon,
 Of feyned pite gaff to them licence
 To ther freendis freeli for to gon
 With ther richessis; but thei wer euerichon 3924
 Bi his bidding & bi his fals tresoun
 Take bi the weie & fetrid in prisoun, —

Or thei wer war was set on them arest.
 And aftir that, of vengable cruelte 3928
 The[r] childre slay[e]n, sovkyng at ther brest,
 Maidnes oppressid of ther virgynyte.
 But in this while, at Epire* the cite
 Ther was a kniht passyng of gret age, 3932
 Which caste of purpos tauenge [t]his outrage.

This same kniht, myn auctour tellith thus,
 In the stori pleynli as I reede,
 Was in Greek tunge callid Bellanicus, 3936
 Riht wis & manli bothe in werk & deede.
 And thynges tweyne put hym out of dreede
 Texecute his purpos in certeyn,
 Maugre alle tho that wolde been hym ageyn. 3940

For comoun proffit he drad nat to* be ded;
 A cause was this: for he was falle in age;
 And a-nother, that put hym out of dreed,
 For he no childre hadde of his lynage. 3944
 His quarell rihtfull gaf hym auauntage,
 And heerupon gadred hym of newe
 Such as he knew that manli wer & trewe.

This purpos holde with circumspect auis,
 And theron maad ful prudent ordenaunce, 3948
 This Bellanicus, old, hardi & riht wis,
 Afforn provided bi knihtli purueiaunce,
 The said[e] tiraunt brouht onto myschaunce 3952
 Bi help of them that wer to hym assentid,
 Vnwarli slayn, whos deth was nat repentid.

3920 and told the
 women they
 could go
 to their friends
 and take their
 possessions
 with them.

3928 But after they
 had started on
 their journey
 he waylaid
 them and put
 them in prison,
 slew their
 children and
 oppressed the
 maidens.

3936 An old knight
 named
 Hellicanus
 resolved to
 punish this
 outrage.

3940 Childless, and
 too old to fear
 death, he
 collected a body
 of supporters

3948 and slew the
 tyrant.

3916. most] full H. 3925. 2nd bi] om. H.
 3929. children H. 3931. at] in H, R 3, H 5, P — Epire] Cipre B.
 3934. This] The H. 3936. Helematus P.
 3941. to] for to B.

[How quene Arcynoe for the auoutrie don with
Demetrius husband of hir douhtir Beronices/
ended in sorow.]¹

Bochas next
turned his pen
to the perverse
licentiousness
of Arsinoe, who
was very
beautiful.

AFFTIR this stori Bochas gan applie
To turne his penne, lik as ye shal heere, 3956
To write & tell the froward lecherie
Of Arsynoe, plesaunt of look & cheere,
Which of hir port & eek of hir maneere
Was in hir daies, lik as it is founde, 3960
For crafft & beute callid Venus the secounde.

She was the
wife of Magas,
king of Cyrene,
and they had
a daughter
Berenice, who
was by her
father's bidding
to marry the
son of Ptolemy:

For hir fairnesse youen in mariage
To noble Agas of Cirenys kyng,
And atween hem, whil thei wer yong of age, 3964
Thei hadde a douhtir, bi record of writyng,
Callid Beronices; the kyng at his eendyng
In his testament bad she sholde be
Weddid to the sone of kyng Tholome. 3968

And this was doon of entencioun
To cese the werris, that hadde endured longe
Atween Egipt, as maad is mencion,
And the Cirenys, bothe rewmys stronge: 3972
Bi this mariage that he myhte vndirfonge
In his deyng to sette a fynal pes
Tween these too rewmys for ther bothe encre.

but after Magas'
death, Arsinoe
married Berenice

After whos deth[e], thus the mateer stood: 3976
Queen Arsynoe, most subtil in werkyng,
Ageyn this mateer so cruel was & wood,
Maried hir douhtir, withoute mor lettyng,
Callid Beronices, ageyn[e]s the biddying 3980
Of hir fadir, that callid was Agas,
As heer-toforn rehersid is the caas.

to Demetrius,
brother of
Antigonus, king
of Macedon.

She maried hire to oon Demetrivs
That brother was, bi Bochas rehersyng, 3984
Onto the myhti grete Antigonvs,
Beyng in Grece of Macedoyne kyng.
But infortunat was afftir hir weddyng,
As in this stori suyng ye shal see, 3988
Bi the fals werkyng of queen Arsynoe.

3977. most subtil in werkyng] made sotile werkyng H.

3984. bi] om. H. 3987. was afftir hir] he was afftir this H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 104 verso.

And to conclude shortli this mateere,
 Whan this queen, this double Arsynoe,
 Sauh of Demetrius the visage & the cheere,
 His look, his colour, his langage & beute,
 His manli port & his liberalite,
 She was enamoured, of flessfli fals plesaunce,
 Lik hir desir taue his aqueyntaunce.

3992 When Arsinoe
 saw Demetrius,
 who was very
 handsome, she
 fell in love
 with him

Of hir nature she was most lecherous;
 And of hir froward inclynacioun
 She brouhte aboute that Demetrius
 Assentid was bi hir suggestioun
 For tacomplisshe, lik hir oppynyoun,
 Al hir desirs of flessfli appetit:
 Thus of accord thei folwed ther delit.

3996

and so managed
 that she
 became his
 mistress.

Lefft his wiff callid Beronices,
 The queenys douhtir, & ageyn al riht
 In a place secre, out of pres,
 Thei lay togidre almost euery nyht,
 Takyng non heed of God nor of no wiht,
 Til of fortune the cas is so befall,
 That he was hatid of his knihtis all,

4000

4004 He forsook
 Berenice and
 was hated by
 his knights for
 his behaviour.

Despiht thei hadde of Arsynoe,
 The deede horrible whan thei dide espie.
 His wiff Beronices eek whan she dede see
 Hooli the maner of ther ribaudie,
 In herte she kauhte a gret malencolie,
 Ordeyned knihtis in steel armid briht
 In ther auoutry to take* hem on a niht.

4008

4012 In her wrath,
 Berenice
 ordered armed
 men to take
 Arsinoe and
 Demetrius in
 their adultery.

Liggyng a-bedde, slepte & took no keepe
 Afftir fals lustis which thei hadden vsid,
 Thei fill upon hem euene whil* thei sleepe.
 The deede open myht nat been excusid,
 To al the world[e] thus thei wern accusid.
 With suerdis drawe the knihtis thilke niht
 To slen hem bothe wer purposed anon riht.

4016

4020 Falling upon
 them in their
 sleep with
 drawn swords,
 they were about
 to put them
 both to death;

Out on Beronices! crieth Iohn Bochas,
 Because she bad spare Arsynoe,
 Ground, roote & gynnyng of this horrible caas,
 Seide hir merci was verray cruelte, —

4024

4028 but Berenice
 badethem spare
 Arsinoe's life,
 which Bochas
 says was a very
 foolish thing to
 do,

3993. &] his H, R 3, H 5. 4009. is] om. H.

4017. take] taken B.

4020. whil] whan B, J, R 3, when P.

To saue suchon it was a fals pite,
As seith myn auctour, a thyng contrarious,
Hir to preserue & slen Demetrius!

for she was
the cause of all
the trouble.

O Beronices, smal is thi discrecioun, 4032
To saue the queen that hath thi[s] tresoun founde.

First to Demetrius she gaff occasioun,
For which she sholde haue had the firste wounde
Take for them bothe, and in cheynis bounde; 4036

And aftir that, this fals Arsynoe
Texauple of other sholde haue punished bee.

Arsinoe shielded
Demetrius with
her naked body

And whil thei wer[e]n thus taken in cloos,
The said Arsynoe made no delay, 4040

But from hir bed anon she up aroos,
Withoute clothes, naked as she lay,
Ran to ther suerdis in al ther gret affray,
Wente atween hem, did hir besi peyne 4044
To bere of strokis with hir armys tweyne.

and begged the
knights to spare
him and kill
her instead.

To saue Demetrius, naked as she stood,
Void of al dreed[e] dede hir besi cure,
Hir white bodi al bespreynt with blood, 4048
Gan to crien out on eueri creature,—
“Alas,” quod she, “lat me allone endure
Deth be my-silff! ye been to despitous,
To save my lyff and slen Demetrius!” 4052

But it was of
no avail:
both died.

To the erthe anon she fill adoun, [p. 257]
To stonde upriht she myht[e] nat susteene,
Ded, pale & wan, with many pitous soun
Deth of Demetrius gan wofulli bêmeene, 4056
Enbracyng hym with al his woundis greene,
And in hir armys, al-be that he lay ded,
She kissid his mouth, cold, blew & nothyng red.

Berenice
afterwards
married
Ptolemy.

In sorwe & compleynt thus she made an eende. 4060
I write no mor of this Arsynoe,
But to Beronices ageyn I wil now weende;
For Bochas seith, the stori ye may see,
She aftir was weddid to Tholome,* 4064
Lik as it was hir fadris first entent,
Whan he deied & made his testament. 4066

¶ *Finis libri quarti.*

4033. this] thi J, thy P. 4041. roos H.
4064. Tholome] worthi Tholome B, J, woorthy Ptholome P.

BOOK V

¶ Incipit Liber Quintus.

[Here Bochas writeth ayenst hem þat delite in beute & semlynesse, calling to purpos how, A man, born in Tuscan which excellid in beute and fairenesse, and for his beute sholdenot* geve othir occasioun to synne he disfigured his visage with many a grete wounde and spotte.]¹

HEEER Iohn Bochas scorneth & hath disdeyn
Of thre maner folk he dide see
Heer in þis world[e], which þat in certeyn
Set al ther ioie and ther felicite
For texelle in fairnesse & beute,
Natwithstandyng, as he* weel telle can,
It hath vndoon ful many worthi man.

Record he taketh of Demetrius,
Which in his tyme was fairest in certeyn,
Which caused hym to be contrarious
To al vertu; his stori ye haue* seyn.
But of tho folk Bochas hath most disdeyn,
That besi been to conquere & recure
Beute bi crafft, which kometh nat of nature.

The thridde is he that gruchcheth ageyn Kynde
For lak of stature or* of semlynesse:
And alle thes thre be ignoraunt & blynde,
And ageyn resoun ther corages thei up dresse.
Yit aboute beute vertu is maistresse;
And litil worth is fairnesse in certeyn
In a persone wher no vertu is seyn.

[p. 259] John Bochas here expresses his contempt for three sorts of people: those who set all their joy to excel in beauty and are contrary to virtue,

8 those who seek to obtain beauty by art which comes not from nature, and those who complain of their lack of stature or good looks.

16

20 Virtue is above beauty.

6. he] ye B, J. 7. many a H.
11. haue] han B.
13. to conquere] by conquest to H.
16. or] & B, J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 105 recto — sholdenot] sloddenot J.

- Bochas tells the story of a Tuscan called Spurina, whose fairness brought women into dotage;
- Vnto purpos he tellith of a man
That excelled al other in fairnesse,
Callid Spurnya, & born was in Tuscan. 24
And folkis hadde ioie and gret gladnesse
To beholde hym for his semlynesse,
Whos beute brouht[e] women in dotage,
Whan thei caste ther look on his visage. 28
- Wyues, maydnes duellyng in that contre
Presed faste on hym to beholde,
Bi thoccasioun of his gret beute,
Nat onli yonge, but summe that wer olde. 32
With lous accesse now wer thei hoot, now colde:
Thus was his beute to many creature
Founde in effect a [ful] pereilous lure.
- and as their husbands were jealous, he prudently resolved to avoid all evil occasion,
- Husbondis olde kauhte a fantasie 36
And hadde in maner a suspeciou,
Stered bi the serpent of fals ielousie,
Toward Spurnya, as maad is menciou;
But for tauoide al euel occasiou 40
Of any peepel that such malis thouhte,
Ye shal heere how wisli that he wrouhte.
- by defacing his countenance with so many cuts and gashes, that he lost all his attraction.
- To put a-wey fals delectacioun 44
And alle occasiouns of Cupidis rage,
He of prudence and discrecioun
With many wounde diffaced his visage;
For he dempte it was a gret damage, 48
That bi thenchesoun of excellent beute
Any creature hyndred sholde be.
- Wise philosophers and poets commended him greatly for this notable deed.
- Philisophres & poetis that wer wise 52
Gaff vnto hym gret comendacioun,
That he koude so notabli deuise,
To fynde a weie withynne his resoun,
To sette aside al occasiou
Of such vnleefful fless[h]li fantasie, 56
That myhte stere women to lecherie.
- He saw that all beauty fades like summer flowers
- He knew afforn & sauh bexperience, 60
That al beute shal waste a-wey & fade
Lik somer flours in ther most excellence,
That growe on hillis & lowe down in the shade:
The rose, the lilie, whan thei be most glade,

Vpon ther stalkis — ther preef is alday seyn —
Been beten down with a stormy reyn.

And semblabli in eueri creature
Of lough degre or of hih estat,
Beute abit nat, nor lenger doth endure
Than youthes sesoun; with age is ful chekmaat.
Who thynketh heron, I holde hym fortunat,
And can afforn[e] in his resoun caste,
No worldli beute in erthe may alway laste.

64 and lasts no
longer than
youth. I hold all
men fortunate
who are aware
of this.

68

¶ Lenvoye.

YE worldli folk that reio[i]she in beute,
Seeth with the eien of your aduertence
How with a smal sodeyn infirmyte,
Whan deth & age list shewen ther presence,
Disteyne al fresshnesse with vnwar violence,
Ageyn whos myht ther is non other grace:
Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface.

72 Ye worldly folk,
who rejoice in
beauty,
remember that
its freshness is
dimmed by age
and death.

76

Thouh Demetrius was fair vpon to see,
As ye han herd rehersed in sentence,
Geyn lawe & riht he loued Arsynoe,
Thoccasioun founde bi hir fals insolence,
Because resoun made no resistance,
Nat aduertying how eueri hour & space
Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface.

80 Although
Demetrius
was fair, he
loved Arsynoe
against law and
right.

84

Ful horrible was ther iniquite,
And tofor God hatful ther offence.
For thoruh fals lust of sensualite,
Lost was the bridil of inward prouidence.
Sharp mortal suerd made the recompence,
Drownid in teres, whan she dide hym enbrace,
With bloodi woundis disfigured al his face.

[p. 260] Their sin was
horrible and
hateful to God,
and their
recompence was
death.

88

O noble Princis, lat this stori bee
A cleer merour to your magnificence,
Theryn considerid the fals fragilite
Of worldli fairnesse, which is but apparence
And transitorie, but so be that prudence
Gouerne the passage vicious lust tenchace:
Processe of yeeris al beute doth difface!

92 O noble
Princes, remem-
ber the fragility
of worldly
beauty, which
is but appear-
ance unless
prudence banish
all vicious
desires.

96

75. vnwar] sodeyn H. 80. ageyn H.
91. disfiguryng H.

[How the too brethern, Seleuchus and Anthiochus
eche desirous to excellen other fel at discord
ended in mischeff.]¹

No quarrel is
worse than one
between kindred,
especially when
they are persons
of high estate.

THER is no man þat can in stori reede
Of mor myscheef nor of mor debat, 100
Than of debat þat is atween kynreede,
Tween blood & blood, geyn kynde infortunat;
Namli in personys which been of hih estat,
As it fill onys, the stori berþ record, 104
Atween to brethre that wer at discord.

Seleucus and
Antiochus, two
brothers, blinded
by worldly
covetousness,
were bitter
rivals.

The ton Seleuchus, Antiochus the tothir,
As the stori heeraftir shal deuise:
Ech desirous for texcellen othir 108
In worldli worshep; & wonderli thei wer wise.
And bothe blent bi worldli couetise
For to clymben up to hih estat,
Which caused hem to been at debat. 112

Both were
mighty kings
and both were
destroyed
by the war that
arose between
them.

Bothe mihti kyngis, Bochas makth mencionn,
And of o wombe sothli thei wer born,
Vndir a cursid fell constellacioun:
Of froward seed may growe no good[e] corn. 116
And thoruh couetise bothe thei wer lorn
And destroied bi the mortal werre
That was atween hem, in Asie nih & ferre.

It is grievous
to read of their
battles and
broken promises.

It is to me verray contagious 120
To reede the batailles & the discenciouns,
The false promyses of Antiochus,
With his* deceitis & conspiraciouns.
Brethre of berthe & off condiciouns, 124
Contrarious weies euer thei dede weende,
Froward ther gynnyng [&] froward was ther eende.

Their mother
was Laodice;
Seleucus was
king in Asia,
Antiochus in
Syria. They
lived among
robbers and
always fled
when they
fought.

Ther mooder was callid Laodices,
And in Asia Seleuchus was regnyng, 128
Euer at werre, koude nat lyue in pes;
And in Surrie Antiochus was kyng.
And among robbours thei made þer eendying:
Wher-euer thei fauht, outhir in wrong or riht, 132
Thei neuer abod but took hem to the fliht.

102. geyn] ageyn H. 107. the] their H.

123. his] the B.

133. Never thei bood J, P — to the] vn to H — the] om. J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 105 verso.

Thouh Seleuchus was at his gynnyng
Shynnyng in glorie & in hih prowessse,
And of Asie he was lord & kyng,
With gret diffame was dirked his noblesse,
Because that he of gret vnkyndenesse
Ful falsli slouh, withoute iugement,
His yonger brother, that was innocent.

Seleucus lost
his good name
by slaying an
innocent
136 younger
brother,

And bi the biddyng of Laodices,
Which was his mooder, of hatful cruelte
Falsli to moordre the queen Beronices,
Wiff to the kyng callid Tholome,
Regnyng in Egipt; but it stood that he,
For al his poweer, failed of his pray,
Because that she was war & fledde a-way.

140
and he
would have
killed Queen
Berenice, wife
of Ptolemy,
if she had not
144 run away.

Yit aftirward, of old hate & envie,
This Seleuchus, bi ful fals tresoun,
Moordred Beronices bi conspiracie,
Hir sone also, as maad is mencioun.
The sclaudre aros thoruh many a regioun
And was reportid onto his diffame,
Wherthoruh he loste his worshep & his name.

148 Yet he
succeeded in
slaying her
together with
her son
afterwards.

And on this moordre auengid for to bee,
For thorrible gret abusioun,
The kyng of Egipt, the said[e] Tholome,
Gan make hym strong, & cam with peepel down.
But for ther was so gret discencioun
Thoruh al his lond, the stori seith certeyn,
He was constreyned to retourne hom ageyn.

Ptolemy sought
revenge, but
156 could do
nothing be-
cause of the
dissensions in
his kingdom.

Seleuchus thanne maad a strong arme,
Gadred shippis, stuffed hem with vitaile,
Toward Asie he taken hath the se,
But such tempest gan his peepel assaile,
That ther hertis and poweer gan to faile,
With thundryng, lihtnyng vengabli distreyned,
To take the lond of neede he was constreyned.

160

Seleucus then
collected an
army and ships
and set sail
164 for Asia, where
he was forced
to land by a
tempest. The
people treated
him kindly.

The peepel of Asie seyng this myscheeff, [p. 261]
Hadde of Seleuchus gret compassioun;
And ther socour to setten at a preeff,
Thei hym resceyued into that regeoun,

172

150. fals conspiracie H.

167. lihtnyng] leuening — distreyned] disteynyd H.

169. The] This H.

Thouh it [so] stood, as maad is menciouñ,
That affor-tyme for his cruel deede
Thei hadde his persone in ful gret hatreede.

He began a
war against
Ptolemy and
was defeated.

And for he fond Fortune fauourable,
Nat considryng hir mutabilite,
He cast of rancour for to be vengable,
And gynne a werre ageyn[es] Tholome.
His men outraied, he was maad to flee;
Knew no refuge nor socour of non othir,
But for gret myscheeff sente to his brothir, —

176

180

Promising his
brother to
crown him king
of Asia, he
asked his aid,
but in the
meanwhile made
a ten years'
truce with
Ptolemy;

I meene his brothir callid Antiochus,
Behestyng hym for to crowne hym kyng
Of al Asie, his stori tellith thus, —
Took treus this while, be sotil fals werkynge,
With Tholome for ten yeer enduryng;
And whan his brother cam with his poweer,
Falsid his promys, double of herte & cheer.

184

188

and when his
brother came
to help him
failed to keep
his promise;
so they
fell out again
and fought, and
Seleucus fled,
as was his wont.

Thus of newe thei fillen at debat;
Euerich gan other myhtili werreie.
Fals couetise tencrecen ther estat
Caused that nouthur list other to obeie.
Mette in a feeld, ther is no mor to seie,
Fauht hand of hand ther hostis bothe too;
Seleuchus fledde, as he was wont to doo.

192

196

Thus a fals werre of hatreede fraternall
Ageyn nature set hem at discord,
Ech bisi was in especiall,
As ther stori remembreth be record,
Neuer ther lyue to been of oon accord.
But whan Seleuchus was thus put to fliht,
The peple off Surrie gan deemen anon riht,

200

When he fled,
the Syrians and
Galatians
thought he had
been killed, and
started to
pillage Asia,

That he that day was outhur taken or ded;
And Gallocrecs, a peeple of gret pouste,
Of couetise gan haste hem ful gret speed
Tentre Asie, & spoille al that contre.
To Antiochus thei hadde eek enmyte,
That he was fayn for his sauacioun
To paie to them a ful gret raunsoun.

204

208

173. maad is] is made H. 195. of] for H.

205. Gallogreies H, Gallogreecs R 3, Gallocreis J, Gallogres H 5.

Ther herte was youe onli to pillage,
 Takyng of hym of gold gret quantite,
 And he, seying of robberyng the outrage,
 Drouh to the pillours; & oon of them was he.
 And thoru al Asie thei robbed ech contre;
 For Seleuchus thei gan so purchace,
 That he nat durste abiden in no place.

and were joined
 by Antiochus,
 212 who paid them
 a large ransom.

Than Antiochus drouh to Tholome,
 Void of sauffconduit or any assuraunce,
 Thouh that atween hem was gret enmyte
 For a sesoun, as maad is remembraunce,
 Tafounde socour in his gret greuaunce.
 But al for nouht; for in conclusioun
 Tholome hym took & cast in derk prisoun.

Seleucus was
 pursued from
 place to place;
 and Antiochus
 220 went to
 Ptolemy
 without a safe
 conduct and
 was put in
 prison.

Ther constreyned of necessite,
 Knowyng no mene to make[n] his raunsoun,
 Bi a woman that lyued in pouerte
 He was help out of that merk prisoun.
 Loo, heer of Fortune a fals condicioun,
 That koude make a kyng withoute peere
 Of a woman to stonden in daungeere!

A poor woman
 helped him
 escape, although
 he was one of
 the greatest of
 228 kings!

To proude folk this may be a merour,
 To seen a prince thus sodeynli brouht lowe,
 That shon in richesse lik an emperour,
 Which of disdeyn[e] list no man to knowe.
 Now is he cast; now is he ouerthrowe;
 Now hath he cause to pleyne, weepe & mourne,
 Knowyng no freend for socour hym to tourne.

232 This should be
 an example to
 all proud
 people.

He was afferd to holden his passage
 Bi hih-weies, or for to kome in siht;
 Fill among theues; & thei be gret outrage
 Al merciles thei* slouh hym anon riht.
 And his brother, for al his gret[e] myht,
 Callid Seleuchus, which was a gret[e] wonder,
 Fill from his courseer & brak his nek assonder.

236

Afraid to travel
 on the highway,
 240 he was captured
 and slain by
 robbers. His
 brother
 Seleucus fell
 off his horse
 and broke his
 244 neck.

211. hertes H.

213. robberyng] robbery H, R 3, robbery H 5.

222. To haue founde J, P.

224. in derk] hym in H, R 3, H 5.

228. merk] dirke H, R 3, dyrke H 5, darke P.

242. thei] ther B.

[How the noble quene Leodomia was in the temple
slayn, and vengeaunce taken/ vpon him that
slouh hir.] ¹

Six princes and
princesses next
came before
Bochas
piteously
weeping.

SIXE of estatis, princis & princessis,
Shewed hem to Bochas pitousli pleynnyng,
To hym declaryng ther mortal heuynessis; 248
And first of alle ther cam to hym weeping
The noble queen, hir sorwes rehersyng,
Cald Laodomya, which with ful heuy cheere
Compleyned the myscheef of hir sustir deere, 252

The first of
them was queen
Laodameia, who
complained
that when
her sister
Nereis married
the king of
Sicily,

Callid Nereis, yong & tendre of age, [p. 262]
That weddid was of Cicile to the kyng.
And on the day of that gret mariage,
Ther fill a stryff & a gret meuyng 256
Among the comouns bamaner of risyng;
That whan the queen[e] therof hadde a siht,
To Dians* temple anon she took hir fliht.

the commons
rose in rebellion
and the two
queens fled
to the temple
of Diana for
protection.

The peeples was parti, & roos ageyn the kyng; 260
For which[e] rumour & the sodeyn striff,
Laodomya, ful feerfulli quakyng,
Ran to the temple for to saue hir lyff,
Supposyng in hyr ymagynatiff, 264
That for the templis chast[e] reuerence
Men wolde spare to do ther violence.

Laodameia
was slain
before the
altar by one
Milo;

But ther was oon bi whom the striff began,
And was first ground of this gret mocioun, 268
Callid Milo, a fals Cicilian,
Void of al reuerence & deuocioun.
Ran to the temple fersere than leoun,
And wher the queen the auter dede embrace, 272
With a sharp suerd[e] slouh hir in the place.

but the gods
and Diana
punished his
sacrilege.
A great
pestilence
followed, and
Milo went mad
and slew
himself on the
twelfth day
after.

This sacrilege was punished be vengeaunce;
Goddis wer wroth with this gret offence.
And Diana bi ful gret displeaunce 276
Made in the contre a sodeyn pestilence;
And Milo was bi vnwar violence
Turnid bestial, maad wood in that affray,
And slouh hymself [l]ff suyng the tuelfte day. 280

247. compleynnyng H. 249. to hym ther cam H, R 3, H 5.
259. Dians] Dianis B, dyanyis R 3, Dianas P. 260. peeples H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 106 recto.

[How* Cleomens ky[ng] of Macedoyne was slayn
with his wif and childre.]¹

A FFTIR this vengauce taken on Milo,
Cam Cleomenes of Macedoyne kyng;
And to Bochar gan shewe* his dedli wo,
His gret iniuries of enmyes assailyng,
His hih emprises, his kyngdam defendyng,
And aldirlast how he in his cite
Was bi the sone slayn off Tholome.

Cleomenes, king
of Macedonia,
who was slain
by the son
of Ptolemy, next
appeared to
284 Bochas.

First in his contre, the stori doth deuise,
Ageyn his enmyes he hadde a gret bataile,
Of his peeple deffendyng the fraunchise
Of knihtli prowesse, as he that list nat faile
For his riht to fiht in plate & maile,
His lieges echon beyng of assent
To lyue and deie with hym in ther entent.

288 He defended
his country
against its
enemies

Men and women, & childre yong of age
Wern of oon herte as in this mateere,
Which made hem strong & gaff* gret auauntage,
That vndeuided thei stood echon ifeere
Off o corage, off o will & o cheere,
Gretli assurid in ther oppynyoun,
Because among hem was no dyuysiou.

296 and had the
support of all
his people,
for there was
no division
among them.

Ther comoun proffit thei dede mor preferre
Than thei dede tresour, lyff or good;
For ther fredam ay redi to the werre,
Nat afferd* to spende ther owne blood.
And fynali togidre so* thei stood,
That of o thouht ech gan hym redi make,
To lyue and deie for his brothres sake.

304 They preferred
their common
good to all
other things
and were not
afraid to shed
their blood for
their country.

Thei* hadde an enmy born of that regeoun,
The name of whom was Antigonus;
And he had weddid, the book makth menciou, *the*
The olde queen of kyng Demetrius,

308 Their enemy
was Antigonus,
who had
married the old
queen of king
Demetrius and
312 usurped the

283. to shewe B. 285. kyndam H.

297. gaff] gat B, J, gate P.

299. 2nd off] om. H.

305. offerd B.

306. so togidre B, J, P, H, H 5.

308. brothis H.

309. Thei] That B, J, H 5, Than R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 106 verso — How] His J.

crown of Sparta
in behalf of her
son Philip;

And hadde hir sone, the stori tellith thus,
Callid Phelipp, for youthe in his keepyng,
Therbi pretendyng a title to be kyng.

but he was
put out of
the kingdom
for all his
presumption.

Off Lacedemonois cleymed ageyn riht 316

Ther to regne & take pocioun,
Lik a tiraunt vsurpyng of gret myht,
For to be crowned in that regeoun.
But for al his fals presumpcioun 320

He was put of and Iset a-ferre,
Thouh he with hem heeld a [ful] mortal werre.

Cleomenes
was in the
battlefeld
every day,
hardy as a lion.

And Cleomenes that was rihtful kyng
Was in the feeld[e] armyd eueri day, 324

Hardi as leoun, dradde hym [in] nothyng,
Geyn his enmyes he stood so at a-bay,
That from the feeld he maad hem fleen away:
His dreedful suerd grounden was so keene, 328
That tabide hym [thei] myhte nat susteene.

Finally he
wearied of
the constant
warfare and
thought it
would be best
to have peace

And on a day diffendyng his cite,
Heeld in the feeld[e] a ful strong bataille;
With litil peeples made his foen to flee, 332

Retournyng hom ful weri of trauaille,
Thouhte in his herte that it sholde auaille
To stynte the werre hangyng in noun certeyn,
Til that his peeples refresshid wer ageyn. 336

until his people
had recovered.
Leaving his
country well
guarded, he
went to Egypt
with his wife
and children
and lived there
until Ptolemy's
death.

Set ordenaunce thoruh al the contre [p. 263]

Geyn al enmyes to make resistance;
And into Egypt he goth to Tholome,
With wiff & childre withdrawyng his presence. 340
Ther resceyued with gret benyuolence
Lich his estat, out of care & dreed,
And ther abood til Tholome was* ded.

But afterwards
Ptolemy's son
slew him and
all his family,
a strange and
cruel thing to
do.

But the sone of kyng Tholome, 344

Which regnid aftir bi successioun,
Of fals envie & vengable cruelte
Slouh Cleomenes in that regeoun,
His wiff & childre, void of compassioun. 348

Alas, it was to straunge a cruel thyng,
Withynne his* kyngdam to moordre so a kyng.

326. ageyn H.

329. That] For H. R 3, H 5—thei] om. R 3.

338. ageyn H.

343. was] wer B, J. 350. his] a B, J, P.

[Of kyng Yero*, Cornelie, and Hanybal.] ¹

A FFTIR whos deth þus wrouht bi violence,
 [As] the stori remembreth proceedyng,
 Foorth cam Yero & shewed his þresence,
 Of Siracuse the myhti stronge kyng,
 Tofor Bochas ful pitousli pleynyng,
 Besechyng hym with a ful pitous cheere
 Of his myscheef to writen the maneere.

352 Hiero of
 Syracuse
 besought
 Bochas to write
 the manner of
 his misfortune.

The which Yero, wilful & furious,
 List to presume of fals rebelloun
 For to debate with Appius Claudius,
 And to maligne ageyn[es] Rome toun.
 But he anon for his presumpcioun
 Constreynd was, in al his moste pride,
 Lik a coward to fleen & nat abide.

360 He rebelled
 against Rome
 and fought with
 Appius
 Claudius,
 and was com-
 pelled to flee
 like a coward.
 Bochas wrote
 no more about
 him.

No mor of hym myn auctour writeth heer,
 But in his book[e] as he doth proceede,
 ¶ Ther cam Cornelie, of Rome a consuleer,
 Hymself compleynyng of the gret falsheede
 Which onto hym acomplished was in deede,
 Bassuraunce broke, of olde Hanybal,
 Which of Cartage was cheeff admyral.

364 Cornelius, a
 Roman consul,
 came next and
 complained
 of the deceit of
 Hannibal,
 368 admiral of
 Carthage, who
 swore to sup-
 port him
 against Rome,
 and then let
 him die in
 prison.

To this Cornelie Hanybal was sworn
 With the Affricanes bamaner flaterie,
 To socoure hym, as I* ha[ue] tolde tofor,
 With the Romeyns to holde up his partie.
 But whan thei mette, the book doth speciefie,
 Corneli take & fetrid in prisoun,
 At myscheeff deied; ther geyned no raunsoun.

372

Than Hanybal entred of entent
 With his knihtis inta gret cite
 Of Cicile callid Agrigent,
 Wher Iulius Silua, of old enmyte,
 Leid a siege with a gret meyne,
 That he constreynd the saide Hanybal
 For verray hunger to lepe ouer the wal.

380 Hannibal was
 afterwards
 besieged by
 Julius Silva in
 Agrigentum,
 whence taking
 flight, he
 escaped by sea
 and was finally
 384 stoned to death
 by his knights.

Bi a posterne he took hym to the fliht,
 Gadred shippis & took the Large Se.
 And Iulius Silua, lik a manli kniht,

388

368. of] on H. 371. Amyrall H. 374. I] we B, J.

MS. J. leaf 107 recto. Yero] Nero J.

Fauht with hym, & made hym for to flee,
 Vpon the watir; [&] anon aftir he
 Was of his knihtes stoned to the deth,
 And so constreyned he yald up the breth. 392

[Off the Duk zantipus/ cast in to see.]¹

After Hannibal
 was slain, Duke
 Xanthippus of
 Sparta appeared.

A FFTIR that Hanybal was slay[e]n thus
 And put to flih[t], as maad is mencionun,
 Tofor Bochas cam worthi Zantipus,
 A famous duk, ful notable off renoun. 396
 And he was lord of the strong regioun
 Lacedemoyn, & was com from a-ferre
 Into Cartage to help hem in the werre.

He helped
 Carthage against
 Rome and
 captured
 Marcus Regulus.

Bi whos prowesse, to his ences of glorie,
 The proud[e] Romeyns wer put to the fliht;
 Cartagynensis hadde of them victorie.
 And ther was take the wise manli kniht
 Marchus Regulus, & brouht anon riht 400
 Into Cartage, & lad as prisoneer
 Bi Zantipus, as Bochas writeth heer. 404

But for all his
 high prowess,
 the
 Carthaginians
 envied him and
 cast him into
 the sea when
 he sailed home
 in one of their
 ships.

This noble duk, for al his hih prowessis
 Doon in Cartage & shewed to ther toun, 408
 And for al his notable kyndenessis,
 Thei most vnkyndeli quit hym his guerdoun;
 For sailyng hom toward his regioun,
 In a shipp stuffid of ther contre, 412
 Of fals envie thei cast hym in the se.

Yet his name
 will remain in
 the House of
 Fame always.

To his noblesse and famous cheualrie,
 Whan he of knihthod sat hiest in his flours,
 Thei of Cartage of* hatreede & envie 416
 Maligned ageyn hym, cheeff sonne of ther socours,
 Taclipsed his lih[t]: but therageyn auctours
 Han be writyng perpetueli set his name
 And it registred in the Hous of Fame. 420

393. slayen] I slayn R 3, yslain P, Islayn H 5.

394. And] First H.

398. com] comen H.

413. thei] that H — the] om. H.

416. of] be B, H 5, bi J, R 3, by P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 107 recto.

[How Marchus Regulus, of his fre wil deied for
the comon wele.]¹

WHO can reherse or telle* the ground of
werris,

[p. 264] Who can tell
why wars first
began? Was it
by the influence
of the stars or
the wilful rage
of man?

The firste cause of such mortal outrage* —

Wher it began bynfluence of sterris

Tween man and man, or of wilful rage,

424

As atween Romeyns & folkis of Cartage,

To gret hyndryng, considered the maneere,

Of bothe parties, as bookis doth us lere.

Italiens therwith wer greued ofte,

428

Namli whan Fortune was ther aduersarie.

Both the
Italians and the
Africans
suffered from
the variance of
Fortune,

And Affrican[els] felte ful vnsofte,

Whan she to them list to be contrarie, —

Whos cours of custum stoundemeel doth varie,

432

Bexperience it hath be preued weel,

In the ouerwhelmyng of hir vntrusti wheel.

The moste worthi & the moste famous,

Afforn remembrid upon ech partie,

436 to-day
victorious,
to-morrow
vanquished.

Fortune to-day made hem victorious,

And to-morwe she dede ther myht deffie.

Now up, now down; al stood in iupartie,

Lik as she list them fauoure, nih or ferre,

440

Ther losse, ther wynnyng callid fortune of werre.

To summe weelwillid, happi & eurous,

To summe also ful straunge of aqueyntaunce;

Rekne among othir Marcus Regulus,

444 Marcus
Regulus, a
great Roman
prince,

On Romeyn parti a prince of gret substaunce,

To be preferrid & put in remembraunce,

Oon the most worthi & trewe founde in deede

Of knihtli policie that I can of reede.

448

To comoun proffit was ay his aduertence,

Tween loue & hate stondyng so vpriht,

To nouthur side declyned the ballaunce

Of his doomys, for fauour of no wiht,

452 was one of
the most just
and vpright
of men.

Til that the eie off his inward siht

Conceyued hadde wher the trouthe stood:

Than gaff he sentence; & theron he abood.

421. reherse or telle] telle or Reherse B. 422. outrages B.

427. doth] don H, R 3.

¹ MS. J. leaf 107 recto.

In all this
world there
was no better
knight,—
well-born,
handsome, and
of great
courage and
strength.

In al this world ther was no bettir kniht, 456
Bettir named & born of good lynage,
A semli persone, delyuer & of gret myht,
Hardi as leoun, riht manli off visage,
Wal of the Romeyns, sharp yerd to Cartage, 460
Demure, nat hasti, seyng al thyng toforn;
And in Papynia I fynde that he was born.

For his discre-
tion he was
chosen consul,

And for he hadde so gret discrecioun,
This worthi kniht, this Marcus Regulus, 464
Chosen he was a consul of the toun,
And hadde a felawe callid Manlius,
In armys manli, wis and vertuuous.
Which for ther expert notable* hih constaunce 468
Of Romeyn werris hadde the gouernaunce.

and together
with Manlius
he defeated
the Sicilians
and Hamilcar,
constable of
Carthage,

Ther shippis stuffed, maad a gret arme,
Ful prudentli with knihtli apparaille 472
Thes princis tweyne taken han the se;
First with Sicilians hadde a gret bataille,
Discounfited hem, & at ther arryuaille
Outraied Amulchar, the stori is no fable,
That was of Affrik capteyn & constable. 476

and sent great
plunder and
many prisoners
to Rome.

Gat in that contre castellis many on,
Took prisoneres, stuff & gret richesse;
And al that pray* to Roome he sente anon 480
Bi Manlius, the stori berth witnesse.
And the Romeyns for his worthynesse,
Alle of assent, because he was so wis,
Prolongid han the terme off his offs.

No one was
equal to him
in knighthood;
and he became
governor of
Africa and
Carthage.

Off knihtli noblesse was non onto hym lik, 484
Nouthir in armys nor politik ordenaunce;
And for the conquest off Cartage & Affrik,
To hym thei gaff of bothe the gouernaunce.
Brouht citees, toun[e]s to the obeissaunce* 488
Of the Romeyns, this noble worthi kniht,
Wher-euer he rood, maugre ther foos myht.

He conquered
all the neigh-
bouring
countries,

Be his feithful laborious dilligence
Gat al the contres to Cartage toun, 492

456. al] *om.* H. 468. notable expert B, J, R 3, P.
477. that] *be* H. 479. pray] *parti* B, *partie* J.
484. R *begins again here.* 487. the] *om.* H.
488. the obeissaunce] his obeissaunce B, R, J.
493. vnto] to H.

Til tidyngis cam vnto his presence,
 Beside a ryuer ther was a gret dragoun,
 So horrible, as maad is menciou[n],
 That al the contre of hym stood in such doute, 496
 No man durste neihhe hym ferre aboute.

and killed a
 horrible serpent

An hundred feet & tueyne was his lengthe,
 Lik as writeth Titus Lyuyus.

that was one
 hundred and
 two feet long.

Was non so hardi, nor no man* of such strengthe 500
 That durste approche; he was so venymous.
 But bi the manhod of Marchus Regulus
 Islay[e]n was this monstrous serpent,
 And for a merueil the skyn to Rome sent. 504

Thus in conquest whil he dede his peyne [p. 265] He also
 To gete castellis & myhti stronge touns, defeated the
 Geyn hym wer sent Astruballis tweyne, two Hasdrubals
 Callid of Affrik the hardi champiouns, 508
 With al the poweer of ther regiouns.
 But as the stori maketh rehersaile,
 Thei wer discourfited bothen in bataile.

Amulchar aftir cam with spere & sheeld 512 and Hamilcar.
 In diffence of Affrik & Cartage;
 And he was also distrussed in the feeld
 With al his host[e], maugre his visage.
 Thus Marchus hadde alway thauauntage, 516
 Makyng the Romeyns, this kniht most vertuous,
 Thoruh hih* prowesse to be victorious.

And wher that he in his tendre age
 List to laboure & tile his owne lond, 520
 For exercise & vertuous auauntage
 To holde the plouh & leede it with his hond,
 Auoidyng slouthe, as ye shal vndirstond, —
 Now thoruh al Affrik with many worthi kniht 524
 He rideth armed in steel & mailles briht.

In his youth
 he had tilled
 his own land,
 but now he
 rode through
 Africa armed
 in bright steel.

496. stood] *om.* R.

498. hundrith H.

500. so] *om.* H, R — nor no man] man nor B, R, J.

503. was] as R.

506. gete] gret R.

507. hastruballis H.

510. the] ther H.

512. Amilchar P.

514. distrussed] distressid J, distressed P.

518. hih] his B, R, J, P. 522. leede] losne H.

525] In steel and mailles he rideth armed bright J, P — maile H.

- And whenever he fought he was victorious. A golden crown of laurel and a robe of victory were kept for him in Rome. The laurel, which never fades, is granted to conquerors;
- This noble Mark, what-euer he hadde ado,
He was in armys soueryn synguleer;
And in the temple at Rome of Appollo 528
For hym was kept a crowne of fressh laureer,
Forgid of gold, fret ful of stonis cleer:
And in the temple of Iouis was reserued
A robe of victorie, which he hath disserued. 532
- To these goddis, who can conside weel,
Of old custum ther rihtis to meyntheene,
As for a thyng beyng perpetuel,
Which fadeth neuere of nature, thus I meene, 536
Isacid is the fressh[e] laureer greene:
For causis tweyne grauntid to conquerours,
In marcial actis bi conquest maad victours.
- for it betokens wisdom, long perseverance in virtue, and foresight.
- For the noblesse of this tre dyuyne 540
Sheweth [bi] his odour in wisdam excellence;
Bi the grennesse, which neuer doth declayne,
Long abidyng of vertuous prudence;
The rounde crowne betokneth prouidence, 544
In signe onli, al knihtli gouernaunce
Taketh his guerdoun of long contynuaunce.
- Their strength alone does not entitle them to a crown, nor does a proud beginning establish their glory.
- Ther strengthe onli graunteth hem nat the crowne,
Nor a proud gynnyng stablissbeth nat *per* glorie, 548
But perseueraunce, who list muse or* rowne,
Graunteth to them & putteth in memorie
The triumphe & palme of ther victorie, 552
The crowne of laureer, in stori it is told,
And of Iubiter the riche robe of gold.
- Thus Regulus was honoured by the Romans,
- Who can disserne, of alle thes giftes thre,
Most apparteneth onto cheualrie,
Manli prowesse, wisdam, anon lat see, 556
Strengthe, hardynesse, conquest, policie? —
For the Romeyns kauhte a fantasie,
For his meritis notable & glorious
To magnefie this Marcus Regulus. 560

526. ado] to do R.

532. robe] robbe H.

541. bi] *om.* J — excellence] & excellence R, J.

548. begynnyng H.

549. or] & B, R.

554. disserne] discern H, discerne J, R 3, descerne P.

For this Marcus duryng his lusti yeeris
 Prynce of the werris geyn Affrik & Cartage,
 Took alle ther yonge knihtis prisoneeris,
 Sent hem to Rome for comoun auountage.
 But O, alas! whan he was falle in age,
 The geri goddessse, among hir chaunges alle,
 Ageyn this prince hir fauour made appalle.

and during the
 years of his
 prime he took
 all the young
 knights of
 Cartage
 prisoner.

564

For to withstonde the prowessse of this kniht,
 In helpe of Affrik, as maad is mencionn,
 Cam Zantipus, of whom I spak now riht,
 A myhti duk, the which[e] was sent down
 Fro Lacedemoyne; which thoruh his hih renoun,
 Whan the poweer of Marchus gan to faille,
 His mene slay[e]n, took hym in bataille,—

568 But when he
 grew old,
 Xanthippus
 captured him
 in battle

572

Into Cartage sent hym prisoneer;
 And ther he lay in stronge cheynys bounde.
 Loo, how Fortune chaunge can hir cheer,
 Falsest of trust whan she is most iocounde;
 First fauourable, aftir froward founde:
 This hir maner with hir double face,
 Folk that sit hiest to chaunge hem fro ther place.

576 and sent him in
 chains to Car-
 thage. Such is
 the manner of
 Fortune:

580

For he that whilom hadde in subieccioun
 Almost al Affrik, & Cartage the cite,
 Now lith he bounde & fetrid in prisoun,
 Whilom in glorie, now in aduersite,
 Cast in miserie from hih prosperite.
 Fortunis fauours be maad, who looke weel,
 Of brotel glas rather than of steel.

her favours are
 of brittle glass
 rather than of
 steel.

584

This manli kniht, al-be that he lay cheyned, [p. 266]
 Which had brouht Rome to so hih encres,
 That thei of Affrik & Cartage wer constreyned
 Vnto the Romeyns to pursue for a pes;
 And for tacomplisshe this mateer dout[e]les,
 Vndir assuraunce made in Cartage toun,
 Thei took[e] Marcus anon out of prisoun.

588 Although
 Regulus was
 in prison, the
 Carthaginians
 were con-
 strained to ask
 592 the Romans for
 a peace;

Bounde bi his oth, ther is no mor to seyn,
 He to be chaungid for Affrik prisoneris;
 Ther for tabide, & thei to come ageyn,
 The yonge knihtis, fressh lusti of ther cheeris.

596 and they sent
 him to
 Rome under
 oath, to be
 exchanged for
 their young
 knights.

563. ther] the R. 580. 1st hir] his R.
 590. to] vp to H, R 3.

So that Marchus, feeble & old of yeeris, 600
 Bi Affrican[e]s was to Rome sent,
 Bi oth assured, tacomplisshe ther entent.

The Romans
 valued him more
 than all their
 prisoners of
 Carthage,

For the Romeyns hadde in such deynte
 This noble Mark for manhod & prudence, 604
 And for the foorthryng of ther comounte,
 Thei hadde his persone for wisdam in reuerence,
 Cald of that toun ther wal & ther diffence,
 Hadde in mor cheerte for knythod in that age 608
 Than al ther prisoneris of Affrik & Cartage.

and rejoiced at
 his deliverance.

Romeyns gretli reioisshe of his comyng,
 And specialli for his delyueraunce;
 Alle attonis, of herte & trewe menyng, 612
 Saide, "wolcom hom, our ioie, our* suffisaunce,
 Wolcome, merour of knihtli gouernaunce!"
 This was ther vois & this was ther langage
 At his repair from Affrik & Cartage. 616

Received with
 cries of welcome,
 and presented
 to the Senate,
 he said:

And thus resceyued lik to his estat
 And conveied thoruh al the cite,
 Nobli presentid up to the senat,
 Began his tale, anon as ye shal see, 620
 As he that hadde mor in cheer[i]te
 The comoun proffit than his delyueraunce,
 Saide onto them these woordes in substaunce:

"Sirs, I was
 sent as prince
 and consul to
 Africa. Seven
 years have I
 been there
 chastising the
 rebels of that
 country.

"Sires, be thauys of you echon present, 624
 First bi thestatis, next bi the comounte,
 As prince & consul to Affrik I was sent;
 And, as ye knowe, seuene yer I haue ther be
 To chastise rebellis of that contre, 628
 And bi the fauour & helpe of Goddis myht,
 To your cite aquit me lik a kniht.

"I am now
 grown old.
 Fortune is no
 longer favour-
 able to me;
 and the people
 of Carthage wish
 me to be sold
 in exchange for
 your prisoners.

In this mateer it needeth nat to tarie,
 Ye knowe yoursilff I am now wexen old, 632
 And Fortune is to me contrarie,
 Werbi your enmyes in Affrik be maad bold.
 And thei desire me for to be sold
 In eschaung, bi short conclusioun, 636
 For prisoneres which ye* haue in the toun.

609. ther] be H.

612. trewe] of H, R 3, H 5. 613. our] & our B, R, J.

627. And] om. H — I haue ther] there I haue J, P.

637. ye] thei B, H, R, J, R 3 — the] bis H, this R 3, P.

And bi the fauour of goddis hih in heuene,
 And bi my felawes wis mediacioun,
 Contrees, provynces, mo than sixe or seuene 640
 I haue in Affrik maad subiect to this toun,
 Maugre ther myht & ther rebelloun,
 And them constreyned, lik as ye desire,
 For tobeie vnto your empire. 644

To make your lordship* mor statli glorious,
 And tencrece the boundis of your cite,
 Whilom bi grace I was victorious,
 Venquissed your enmyes wher-euer I dede hem
 see; 648

Now thoruh Fortunis mutabilite
 Maad vnhappi & desolat of cheer, —
 Sumtyme a prince & now a prisoneer.

Afforn, my power bi Fortune was fraunchised, 652
 Now am I thrall & fetrid in prisoun;
 Myn olde triumphes be neweli now disguised,
 And [my] victories oppressid & bor doun.
 With this considered the transmütacioun 656
 Of youthe passid & myn vnweeldi age,
 Lital wonder thouh dul be my corage.

Yit ther is a thyng that draweth along my lyff,
 Which in myn herte hath sette gret gladnesse: 660
 To your ences how in this mortal striff
 Bi my labour & knihtli bisynesse
 The marcial princis, famous in worthynesse,
 With al the knihtis most soueryn of renoun 664
 Souht thoruh Affrik, be now in your prisoun.

Bi whos absence feeblid is Cartage;
 The contre porissed, brouht to disencres.
 Seyng that I am dul and falle in age
 Geyn Affricans to put my-silff in pres, 668
 Causing your enmyes [to] pursue for the pes
 Beschauung of me, that may but smal auaile,
 For Affrik knihtis most expert in bataille. 672

"Once I was
 a prince and
 victorious; but
 now I am a
 prisoner of war.

"My former
 triumphs are
 transformed,
 my victories
 borne down, my
 youth passed.

"Yet it cheers
 me to know
 that through
 my labour you
 have the best
 knights of
 Africa in your
 prison,

which weakens
 your enemies.
 They now
 ask to have
 them back again
 in exchange for
 me,

641. this] his R.

645. lordship] Empire B, R, J.

655. &] an R.

659. a thyng] a nothir H, R 3 — that] om. J — along] a length P.

671. of] for H, R 3.

672. Affrik] be Affrik H, þaffrike R 3, the Auffryk H 5.

so that they
may begin
a new war
on your city.

Thei stonde in hope of ther delyueraunce [p. 267]

Beschaung of me, now sent out of prisoun,
Of entent tencrecen ther puissaunce,
Of newe to gynne a werre upon your toun. 676
Now taketh good heed, & of discrecioun
Peiseth of prudence this thyng that I haue told,
Ther youthe considred, & I am feeble & old.

"I am feeble
and old, they
lusty and fresh;

I am consumyd & wered in the werris; 680

Fortune contrarie, I feeble to bere armure:
Thei lusti fressh, ther name spredde ful ferr is,
And in the feeld thei able to endure.
I vnweldi, & lik a creature 684
Mor sembl[abl]e to drawe hom to my graue,
Than to be armyd this cite for to saue.

and I am more
anxious for the
profit of your
commonwealth
than for my
own deliverance.

And in effect, I haue mor cheer[i]te,
Of verray feith withoute variaunce, 688

Vnto the proffit of your comounte
Than to the mateer of my delyueraunce;
Too thynges peised & weied in ballaunce:
Of Affrik knyhtis thexpert worthynesse, 692
In me the constreynt off agis feebilnesse.

"I cannot do
better than die
for the
community."

And to conclude upon this mateer,
I myhte neuere, as semeth onto me,
As of knihtod disseruen the laureer 696
Nor the tryumphe in this famous cite,
Bet than deie tencrece the comounte,
And thus auised, of herte & hool corage
Yeld up the sperit of myn vnweeldi age." 700

Persevering in
this intention,

In this purpos, he, stedfast as a wall,
Of o will and oon perseueraunce,
Hymself comendyng to goddis inmortal,
Ches for to deie off politik constauce, 704
And to preferre bi notable purueyaunce
The comoun proffit: this was his motiff, —
Set aside good, tresour and his lyff.

he returned to
Carthage a
prisoner.

Riht weel cheerid, stable of his visage,
Of parfit loue he hadde onto the toun,
He is repaired ageyn onto Cartage, 708

676. newe] now R. 677. taketh] take H.

682. name] fame H, R 3, H 5.

685. semblable] seembly R.

702. oon] o H. 710. onto] in to H.

Tharticles kept and the condicioun
 At the departyng from Affrik regioun:
 This to seyne, texpleite ther lust certeyne,
 Or prisoneer he to resorte ageyn.

712

At his departyng the Romeyn senatours
 Gan wexe pale off compassioun,
 To seen the paus of al ther old socours
 As prisoneer departe out of the toun.
 Princessis, ladies fill a-swowne doun;
 Childre wepte & cried for pite,
 "Farweel upholdere, cheeff wal of our* cite!"

At his departure
 the Roman
 716 Senators grew
 pale with
 compassion,
 princesses and
 ladies fell down
 in a swoon and
 the children
 720 wept.

Was euer founde any trewer kniht?
 Which of his owne feithful mocioun,
 Wher he was free, & poweer hadde & myht,
 Taue stonde at large bi his eleccioun,
 To keepe his promis repaired to prisoun!
 What shal I write of his noblesse or shewe? —
 To fynde oon lik hym, I reede but of a fewe!

Never was there
 a truer knight.

724

And whan he cam ageyn with his massage,
 Knowyng thentent of this worthi knyht,
 Most furiously the people of Cartage,
 In the presence of euery maner wiht,
 Ordeyned han a torment anon riht.

The people of
 Carthage,
 furious in their
 disappointment,
 tortured him
 by cutting off
 732 his eyelids,

728

First the liddis of his eien tweyne,
 Thei kutte hem of to encrece his payne,
 That he nat sholde slepen in prisoun,
 But euer wachche with payne intollerable,
 And for the constreynt of his passioun
 Crie & compleyne with sihhis lamentable.
 And aftir this, thei token a pleyⁿ table,
 Fret ful of nailles sharp[e] whet & grounde,*
 And therupon naked thei hym bounde.

736 and bound him
 naked to a
 table studded,
 with sharp
 nails,

740

Another table thei leide on hym aloffte,
 Nailed also; and atween thes tweyne
 Thei couchid hym; his* bed was ful vnsoffte,
 Most importable, so hidous was the payne;
 The blood ran out of eueri senew & veyne.
 This was his torment, alas, a cruel deth! —
 Of worthi Marchus til he yald up the breth.

744 beneath another
 nailed table,
 and let him
 lie there till
 he died.

748

711. tharticle H. 712. At] And R. 721. our] ther B, J, R.

728. reede but of] fynde but P — of] om. P.

729. his] this H. 741. grounde] Igrounde B, R, J.

745. his] this B, R, J, R 3, P.

Who ever read
of such a
steadfast prince?

Who radde in bookes or euer dede see
Of any princis so stedfast & so stable
As whilom wern in Rome the cite,
Or in ther conquest so longe perdurable,
On vertu foundid, of corage vnchaungable!
Rekne up alle that euer wer in that toun,
And to this Marchus mak no comparisoun. 752

Regulus
eclipses the glory
of the Camilli,
Papiri, Scipios,
of Curtius and
Fabricius,

Rekne Kamylls, Papires, Scipiouns, [p. 268]
Notable worthi for many gret victorie;
Rekne up alle ther othir* champiouns,
Cursius, Fabricus famous of memorie. 756
But this Regulus eclipseth al ther glorie
And surmounteth, bi report of renoun,
Al thes forsaide in comparisoun.

of the rich
Lucius, Scaurus,
Caius Delius,
Æmilius,

Rekne up the foure that whilom wer so riche, 764
The firste of them callid Lucius,
Other tweyne of condicioun liche,
As was Scavrus & Gayus Delius;
And forget nat the grete Emelius, — 768
But for al ther gret pocessioun,
Make to Marchus no comparisoun.

and Crassus,
whose throat
the Assyrians
poured full of
molten gold.

Remembre on Crassus, of whom it is told,
The Assiriens to staunche his couetise 772
Pored in his throte, strangled hym with gold;
So he deide, the stori doth deuise.
And thouh thes foure wendyn ha be wise,
Gretli comendid thoruh fals oppynyoun, 776
Of them to Marchus mak no comparisoun.

He left his
freedom and
wealth behind
him and died
for the welfare
of his country.

Touchyng this Mark, lat men beholde & see:
He lefte his tresour, his fredam & richesse,
And for the proffit of the comounte 780
Forsook his freendis, Bochas berth witnesse;
To foorthre his toun deied in distresse,
To keepe his feith resorted to prisoun, —
Mak of non othir to hym comparisoun. 784

752. in] in the R.

759. othir] worthi B, R, J.

762. of] & H, R 3, H 5.

766. condiciouns H.

771, 72 are transposed in R.

771. on] of R.

Myn auctour heer put in remembraunce
 Summe that hadde gold, stonis & perre,
 Summe that hadde of riches habundaunce,
 And of othir that stood in dignite,
 And summe that hadde worldli prosperite, —
 Set al aside, & conclude on resoun,
 Tween them & Marchus is no comparisoun.

Princis may lyue aftir ther ententis,
 Aftir ther lustis, after ther delices,
 Of gold & purple were riche garnementis,
 Aftir ther poweer frowardli in vices,
 Graunte ther mynistris in cites gret offices, —
 Tween al ther pompe & veyn ambicioun
 And atween Mark mak no comparisoun.

Alle these thynges remembred in certeyn,
 Weel considred & Iput in mynde,
 Ther wer* in Rome but fewe such[e] seyn,
 To comoun profit that founde wer* so kynde.
 And, til I may such another fynde
 In al this book[e], turnyng up-so-down,
 I will to hym make no comparisoun.

788 Some men had
 great riches;
 others stood in
 high dignity, or
 in worldly
 prosperity.
 Make no
 comparison
 between them
 and Marcus.

792 Princes may live
 according to
 their desires and
 wear rich
 garments of
 gold and purple;
 but between all
 their pomp and
 vain ambition
 and Marcus
 make no
 comparison.

800 Nor will I do
 so until I find
 another such.

804

[Lenvoye.]

THIS tragedie, who þat can take heede,
 Is entermedlid with wo & gladnesse:
 Ioie for [the] worshep & synguler manhede
 That was in Mark bi excellent noblesse;
 To reede his fall it is gret heuynesse,
 Which ches to deie, wher-as he stood[e] fre,
 Onli for profit of the comounte.

To keepe his oth, pleyntli, as I reede,
 Maad in Cartage, ther beyng in distresse,
 This noble prince constreyned off no neede,
 But of fre will, myn auctour doth expresse,
 Fro Rome ageyn[e] thidir gan hym dresse
 To suffre torment, off his free volunte,
 Onli for profit of the comounte.

808 In this tragedy
 are mingled joy
 for the manhood
 of Marcus and
 sorrow for
 his fall.

812

Of his own free
 will he chose to
 die for the
 profit of the
 community.

816

786. perre.] peerle H. 789. And] of H, R 3.
 790. aside] on side H. 801. wer] was B, R, J, P.
 802. wer] was, B, R, J. 808. the] om. R.

His story should
be crowned with
golden letters, This stori sholde crowned been in deede 820
With golden lettres, for to bern witnesse,
How [the] seid Mark, hauyng of deth no dreede,
To sette Rome fro werre in sekirnesse, —
Whos hih renoun, most souereyn of prowesse, 824
May neuer eclipse bi non antiquite,
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte.

and he deserved
the reward of
triumph, the
garment of
purple fret with
precious stones
and the laureate
wreath of
victors. He disserued for to han the meede 828
Of tryumphe and marcial worthynesse,
And of Iubiter to were the purpil weede, •
Fret ful of stonis, most heuenli of brihtnesse,
The laureat crown conseruyng his grennesse,
Graunted to victours, who list considre & see, — 832
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte.

Noble Princes,
who govern the
people of this
world, take heed
to this story,
and let Marcus
be to you a
mirror. Noble Princis, which that gouerne & leede 836
Al worldli peepel, taketh heed in your hyhnesse
To this stori, trewe as is the creede,
Takyng exaample, doth your bisynesse
Ay to supporte & meynteene rihtwisnesse,
And lat Marchus to you a merour be,
Which ches to deie to foorthre the comounte. 840

[How Tholome kyng of Egipt callid Philopater slouh
fader & moder & his wif in lechery spende his
lif & mischeuesly ended.]¹

Next in order,
Ptolemy
Philopator, who
slew his father,
mother and
sister, appeared
complaining to
Bochas. **N**EXT to Bochas in ordre compleynyng, [p. 269]
Vicious of lyff, ther cam Tholome
Cald Philopater, & was of Egipt kyng.
In tendre age borrible cruelte 844
Slouh fader, mooder & suster, ye may see,
He to be crownid, it is maad mencionn,
To regne allone in that regeoun.

He was inclined
to every vice,
and murdered his
wife and spent
his youth in
riot and outrage. He was disposed onto eueri vice, 848
Froward to vertu & to al doctryne,
Slouh his wiff callid Erudice,
Lefft his spouse, took a concubyne,
Wasted his lyff, gan hymself encline 852
To al riot, surfet & outrage;
And in this wise he spent his yonge age.

822. the] om. J.

841. in ordre to Bochas R 3, P. 843. &] that P, H 5.

844. borrible] horrible R, bi horrible H, J, R 3, be horryble,
H 5, by horrible P. 848. onto] to H. 850. Euridice P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 109 recto.

Thus was disclaundred his roial mageste,
 In lecherous lustis wachched al [the] niht,
 A-bedde til noon, ageyn al honeste,
 Of fals excesse shoop hym anon riht,
 Whan he aroos, to drynke* ageyn[e]s myht
 Gorge upon gorge tafforce his lecherie.
 The longe day he spent in glotonye.

856 Against all
 decency he lay
 abed till noon,
 and stuffed and
 drank until
 night to fortify
 his lust.

I wexe weri the processe for to write
 Of this tiraunt, vicious and wood.
 It is contagious the processe to endite,
 Because thexample doth harm & no good.
 And of vengauce thus with hym it stood:
 Of sodeyn myscheeff I reede he dide fyne,
 Enbracid in armys of his concubyne.

860

864 It is tiresome
 and odious to
 write about
 this tyrant.
 His example
 does harm and
 no good. He
 died suddenly
 in the arms of
 his concubine,
 Agathoclea; and
 868 she and her
 son and all
 their kin were
 afterwards
 hanged.

Agothodia pleynli was hir name,
 And hadde a sone callid Agathodes,
 Vicious bothe & slaundrid bi diffame,
 Noised by report, thei wer so rek[e]les.
 Bothe attonis take in a sodeyn pres,
 With ther allies alle attonis fett,
 And bi iust doom lad to the gibett.

872

[How Abithomarus & viridomarus dukis of Fraunce,
 aftir grete batailles bi Romainys were slayn.]¹

NEXT Philopater, callid Tholome,
 Per cam in ordre a worthi duk of Fraunce,
 Abithomarus; & out of that contre
 Rood into Grece with a gret puissaunce.
 And first he gan to make his ordenaunce
 Ageyn Romeyn[e]s, al-be thei wer ferre,
 Proudli with them for to gynne a werre.

876 After Ptolemy
 Philopator
 came
 Britomaris,
 who rode from
 France into
 Greece and
 880 made war on
 Rome.

But thei of Rome to ther confusioun,
 Bi ther bisshoppis & preestis gan deuise
 To vse a cursid fals supersticioun:
 Vnto ther goddis in ful cruel wise
 To offe up men banewe sacrefise,

884 The Romans
 had a cursed
 custom of
 burying people
 alive as an
 offering to their
 gods,

856. the] *om.* R.

859. drynken B. 868. Enbracyng in þe Armys H.

869. Agathodia J, Agathoclea P. 874. alle] both H.

878. Britomarus P.

885. fals cursid H, R 3. 887. banewe] bi newe R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 109 verso.

And* burie hem quyk, in Bochas thus I reede, 888
Bi a fals hope thei better for to speede.

and now they
took ten of the
French and
Greeks, five
men and five
women, and
sacrificed them;
but their gods
were angry.

Of Fraunse & Grece thei took[e] ten in noumbre,
Halff men & women, togidre tweyne & tweyne;
And bi fals moordre thei dede hem encoumbre, 892
Buried hem quik — ther deth was ful sodeyne.
At this sacrefise the goddis gan disdeyne,
And to the Romeyns wex contrarious
For ther fals rihtis supersticious. 896

In this year,
521 after the
foundation,
Rome was
governed by
three consuls,

And bi record of olde cronicleres,
The yeer fyue hundred fro ther fundacioun
And on & twenti, tho beyng consuleris
Thre in noumbre, as maad is mencion, 900
Which gouernyd & reuled al the toun.
The firste callid Lucius Emylius,
And the secounde Catulus Gaius,

who were
assigned by
the Senate to
defend the city.

Attilius Regulus the thridde consuleer. 904
Bi al the senat ordeyned wer thes thre,
As I haue told, the silue same yeer
For to gouerne & reule ther cite,
And to preserue hem from al aduersite 908
Ageyn too peeplis, of Gaule & Lumbardie,
Which than werreied of malis & envie.

But there were
so many
Lombards and
other fell
foreigners,

Of which[e] werre the Romeyns stood in doute,
The senatours & alle the citeseyns, 912
Because ageyn them ther cam so gret a route
Of Lumbardis bi this halff the mounteyns,
Ioyned togidre with many fell foreyns,
Which stood departid, as maad is remembraunce, 916
Fro them of Rome & fro ther obeissaunce.

barbarous and
savage, and
unreasonable
in their fury,

The peeple rud[e], bestial & vnstable,
Togidre assemblid, wood & furious,
Of multitude verray innumerable, 920
Vengable of herte, of corage despitous,
Void of al resoun, sodenli furious,
As seith Bochas, I can no ferther gon; —
Ther soudiours bar gisarmys euerichon. 924

888. And] To B, R, J, P — thus] as H, R 3.

889. thei] the R 3, H 5, P. 894. At] And R.

896. ther] the R.

903. Catalus Caius P. 907. reule] om. R. 908. fro H.

912. 2nd the] their H.

And Gisarmes of Gisarme* thei wer callid, [p. 270] that the
Toward Rome them hastyng day be day, Romans stood
Of gret labour the footmen sore appallid; in great dread.

But al* ther trust on multitude lay. 928
Of whos komyng Roome stood in affray,
And specialli the consuleris thre,
That out wer sent to fihte for the cite.

Foure score thousand, as writ the cronycleer, 932 Although each
Mihti [men] to stonden at diffence, consul had an
In his felasheepe hadde ech consuleer. army of four
And of the Gysarme3 noumbred in sentence, score thousand
Thre hundred thousand, bi sturdi violence men, they were
Goyng on foote, I fynde that thei hadde, outnumbered by
Eihte thousand ouer, that al the feeldis spradde. 936 their enemies.

I rekne nat them that rood on hors[e]bak, who covered
Which sexe & thretti thousand wer in noumbre, 940 the earth with
Sixe hundred ouer, purposed for the wrak, their shadow,
Fynalli the Romeyns to encoumbre. and were led by
The shadwe of them gaff so gret an oumbre, Britomaris and
That on the soil, which afforn was greene, Viridomarus.
Ther was vnnethe any sonne scene.* 944

Ther capteyn was Abithomarus,
A manli man & a ful worthi kniht.
And with hem wente Virydomarus, 948
A-nother capteyn, in steel armyd briht.
Tween them and Romeyns longe laste the fiht;
But on the parti of Rome the cite
Was slayn a consul that was oon of the thre. 952

Aftir whos deth, of fortune anon riht,
On the parti of them of Rome toun
Eihte* hundred thousand took hem to the fliht.
And thus began the fame & the renoun 956
Of Abithomarus, as maad is mencioun,
Of which victorie his herte was maad fayn.
And on his parti wer thre thousand slayn.

925. Gisarme] Gisarmes B, R, J, P.

928. al] ay B, R, J, P.

933. men] om. MSS., P. 934. consuleer] a Consuler H.

935. the] om. H, R 3 — number P. 941. hundreth R.

944. which] bat H. 945. scene] sheene B, R, J, shene P.

947. worthi] manly H. 952. the] om. R.

955. Eihte] viij B, One P. 957. Britomarus P.

Then the
Romans rallied
and slew
40,000
Gisarmes.

But the Romeyns resorted been ageyn;
And aftr that hadde a strong bataille.
And in the feeld so manli thei wer seyn,
And so proudli ther enmyes dide assaille,
That, as myn auctour mak[e]th rehearsaille,
Of the Gisarmes, longe or it was niht,
Fourti thousand wer slayn in that fiht. 960

They fought
once more
beside the
Po;

The thridde tyme, with helpe of them of France
Ioyned to Lombardes & folk of Gaule also,
Thei fauht ageyn, al out off ordenaunce,
Beside the ryuer that callid is the Poo,
Wher bothe batailles togidre hadde adoo.
And, as I fynde, consuleris tweyne
The Romeyn sheltrouns knihtli did ordeyne. 968

and the
Romans, led
by Manlius
Torquatus and
Flaminius
Flaccus, slew
49,000 of their
enemies.

Manlius Torquat callid was the ton;
Flamynus Flakkus was with hym ifeere:
And with the Romeyns togidre forth* thei gon
Toward that ryuer with a ful manli cheere;
In which bataille, the stori doth vs lere,
Nyne and fourti thousand slayn on that day
Of ther enmyes, that non ne wente away. 972

Britomaris was
made prisoner
and led to the
Capitol in
chains.

Abithomarus was take prisoner,
In tokne of tryumphe brouht to Rome toun,
To the Capitoile, with a ful pale cheer,
Lad bounde in cheynis, ther geyned no raunsoun:
Thus hath Fortune appallid his hih renoun.
And in tokne of his disconfiture,
Offrid to goddis was his cote armuë. 984

Atropos broke
the thread of
his life.
Viridomarus was
slain in the
feild.

Thus Lachesis his lyues threed gan drawe
Til Antropos it brak with ful gret payne.
Viridomarus, that was his fellowe,
Slayn in the feeld bi Romeyns in certeyne.
And of thes [noble] worthi princis tweyne,
This was the eende & the mortal fall,
The feeste accomplished callid funerall. 988

973. The] To R. 974. the] þat H.

975. Flamynus] Flamyn R, J.

976. togidre forth] forth togidre B, J, P — forth] forsooth R.

977. that] þe H — ful] om. H. 978. In] I H.

981. Britomarus P — taken H.

988. His lives threde thus Lachesis H, R 3, H 5.

989. ful] om. H. 992. noble] om. MSS., P.

And in the tyme of thes mortal werris
 Atween thes dukes & them of Rome toun,
 Many toknis wer shewed in the steris,
 Merueilous lihtnyngis fro the heuene doun,
 And many an vnkouth constellacioun;
 Sondri cometes dide in the walkyn appeere, —
 Who seeth ther stories may the trouthe lere.

At the time of
 these mortal
 wars many
 strange tokens
 were shewn in
 the stars,
 marvelous
 lightnings,
 comets and
 uncouth
 constellations.

The water of Pitene, that renneth in Itaille,
 Which in that contre is a famous flood,
 The same hour & tyme of ther bataille,
 As seith the stori, was turnid into blood.
 Fires in the hair, most furious & wood,
 That mihti tours wer with the flawmes brent;
 Thre moonys appeeryng in the orient.

The waters of
 a river were
 turned into
 blood; fires
 burnt high in
 the air; and
 three moons
 were seen in the
 east.

The peeples for feer fledde into lowe kauis, [p. 271]
 For dreed wex pale & dedli of ther cheer;
 And in thre daies wer thre erthe-quauis.
 Duryng thes werris and in the same yeer,
 Of gret Appollo fill doun the pilleeer
 Of marbil whit, large and of gret strengthe,
 That sexti cubitis acountid was the lengthe.

The people
 fled for fear
 into caves; for
 in three days
 there were
 three earth-
 quakes, and
 the marble
 pillar of great
 Appollo fell
 down.

And in that tyme, the stori seith nat nay,
 Of Rome a consul with a gret puissaunce,
 Callid Claudius, slouh upon a day
 Thretti thousand, & brouht hem to myschaunce,
 Of the soudiours that cam out of Fraunce.
 And ther was slayn, with many a capteyn lorn,
 Viridomarus, of whom I spak tofor.

Claudius, a
 consul, slew
 30,000 Gauls
 in battle;

To his gret shame and confusioun,
 As it is remembred be scripture,
 The Romeyns made a gret oblacioun
 Vp to Iubiter of his cote armure.
 And in tokne of his disconfiture,
 Withynne that temple, of gold betyn cleer,
 To his despiht thei heng up his baner.

and to the
 shame and
 confusion of
 the dead
 Viridomarus, his
 coat armour and
 golden banner
 were offered as
 an oblation
 to Jove.

998. lihtenyng frome H.
 1000. walkyn] wakyn R.
 1001. ther] thes R — may] he may H, R 3.
 1020. the] ther H — cam] om. R.
 1021. was] om. R — with] & H.

[How Siphax of Munedie kyng was take & deied
in prissoun.]¹

Bochas next
speaks briefly
of the war
between
Hannibal and
worthy Scipio,

HEEER Bochas breeffli for a remembrance
Writeth of werris, debatis & batailes
That wer þat tyme in Itaille & France, 1032
In Spaigne, Chaumpayne, with marcial apparailles.
And among othir in his rehersailles,
He tellith in Affrik the gret[e] discencioun
Atween Hanybal & worthi Scipioun. 1036

and then turns
to Syphax, king
of Numidia,

He touchith ther namys & abit nat longe;
Vpon ther stories he bit nat but a while,
Heer nat rehersyng ther myhti werris stronge,
Nor of ther stryues he doth heer nat compile, 1040
But doun descendyng, directeth forth his stile
For to reherse & telle be writyng
The fall of Siphax in Munedie kyng.

who defeated
two kings in
two battles.
One of the kings,
Masinissa,
was obliged to
flee from his
country and
consort with
robbers and
wild beasts and
live on roots
and fruit.

This said[e] Siphax batailles hadde tweyne, 1044
Oon with kyng Gabba, [&] he of verray myht
Hadde eek another, in which he dede his peyne
To meete Masmyssa afftir anon riht.
And bothe kynges he putte to the fliht. 1048
And of Messulie, I fynde be writyng,
How Masmyssa was gouernour & kyng.

This said[e] Siphax thoruh his cheualrie
Maad Masmyssa to fleen his regioun, 1052
Constreynyng hym to lyue be robberie,
To walke in forestis with beestis up & doun.
And for diffaute, as maad is mencion,
To saue his liff he fond no bet reffut, 1056
But fedde hymself on rootes & on frut.

Even his name
was forgotten in
his own land.

Out of his reum Masmyssa was enchaced,
And constreyned to fleen from his contre;
Fro mynde of folk his name was out raced, 1060
For no man wiste wher he sholde be.
His liegemen & folk of his cite,
Thoruh al Affrik knew no bettir reed
Off his persone, but dempte that he was ded. 1064

1031. of] *om.* J — bataill H.

1032. &] & in H, R 3. 1033. appaiaile H, R 3, H 5.

1034. rehersaile H, rehersaill R 3. 1038. nat] *om.* R.

1040. heer nat] nat her H. 1043. Numedy P.

1045. Gabba] Galba H, R 3, Gala P, Gabla H 5 — &] *om.* R, J.

1047. Masinissa P. 1049. Massile P. 1053. be] in R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 110 recto.

Thus of kyng Siphax encrece gan the glorie,
Which bi force too kynges hath outraied,
And upon them wonnen the victorie,
Put hem to fliht & the peeple affraied;
That Rome & Cartage wer of hym dismaied.
And ech of them dede ther labour
Of ther werris to make hym *gouernour*.

Vnto [this] Siphax, out of Rome toun,
As it is write for a memoriall,
To Numedie was sent Scipioun
For this mateer in especiall.
Out of Cartage was sent Hastruball;
And at the castell wher Siphax lay,
Bothe tweyne arryued at o day.

And be pleyn writyng as I haue conceyued,
And as the stori remembreth in sentence,
At ther comyng bothe wer resceyued
Of kyng Siphax with gret[e] reuerence.
And thoruh his notable manli dilligence,
As it is Iwrityn be record,*
He made thes capteyns hertili of accord,

That thei togidre lay the same niht,
Thei hadde of Siphax so gret surete,
Be promys maad, as he was trewe kniht,
That nouthur of them sholde deceyued be.
But ther was founde ful gret duplicite
Folwyng afftir, who-so can take heede,
Lik as this storie shal deuise in deede.

For bi the fraude & falsnesse most mortall
Compassed befor[e]n, it is thus befalle,
That bi the sleihte of this Hastruball, —
As Affrican[els] be nih double alle,
Vnder sugre can hide weel ther galle, —
So Hastruball bi fals decepcioun
Vnder fair cheer deceyued Scipioun.

He brouht in Siphax bi fals sotilte,
And bi his sleihti peynted fair langage,
That he sholde with hym allied bee,
Be ful assent to hauen in mariage

Thus the glory
of Syphax
increased; and
both Rome and
Carthage
sought to make
1068 him their
general.

1072 From Rome
Scipio was sent
to him, from
Carthage
Hasdrubal.

1076

Both were
received with
1080 great respect;

1084

both were given
the same
promise.

1088

1092

[p. 272] But by the
duplicity of
Hasdrubal,

1096

1100 Syphax was
promised
Sophonisba in
marriage, and
thereby induced
to side with
Carthage.

1066. hath] had R. 1072. this] om. R, J, P
1084. record] good record B, R, J, P.
1096. double nyh H, doubill nyh R 3.
1100. fals] his H, R 3, hys H 5.

Sophonisba, a maiden of Cartage, 1104
Which was douhtir, yong & fa[i]r withal,
As seith Bochas, to this Hastrubal.

Scipio was
deceived,

The which[e] thyng be crafft was brouht aboute 1108
And acomplisshe[d] verrailly in deede.
And bi this mene, pley[n]li out of doute,
Ther first began rancour & hatreede,
Symulacioun, feynyng & falsheede,
That atween Siphax & Hastrubal, alas, 1112
Scipioun was deceyued in this caas.

After his
marriage,
Syphax
and Hasdrubal
made war on
the Romans;

And aftir that doon was this mariage,
Siphax ful enmy vnto* Sipioun,
With Hastrubal rood into Cartage 1116
And gan werreie ageyn[e]s Roome toun.
And in this while, as maad is mencionn,
Kyng Masmyssa out of wildirnesse
Toward Scipioun in al haste gan hym dresse. 1120

and Masinissa,
joining forces
with Scipio,

With his peeple gan to make hym strong
Thoruh help of Scipioun & of Bellius,
Wente ageyn Siphax, & abood nat long,
His herte ageyn hym was so envious. 1124
And on a day, the stori tellith thus,
With Affricanyss & folkis of Cartage,
Siphax the Romeyns mette in the visage.

helped him take
vengeance on
Syphax, who
was captured

Of Masmyssa the peeple wer so wood 1128
Vpon Siphax auengid for to bee,
Thoruh ther batailles cam to hym ther he stood,
And maugre hym and [al] his cruelfe,
Of verray manhod — space was non to flee — 1132
Thei brouhte hym hom thoruh ther hih renoun
Into the handis of worthi Scipioun.

and led
prisoner to
Rome.

Siphax was take thus or he was war,
Vndir his baneer, maugre al his myht, 1136
And into Rome lad afforn the chaar
Off Scipioun, the noble worthi kniht,
That wan the tryumphe, grauntid hym of riht.
And Sophonisba, afforn to Siphax wiff, 1140
Weddid to Masmysse at theende of al this striff.

1114. And] Anoon H, Anon R 3. 1115. vnto] to this B, R, J.

1116. into] in R.

1122. 2nd of] om. H. 1127. mett be Romayns H.

1128. wer] was R, H. 1130. bataille H.

1131. al] om. R, J. 1141. Masmyssa H.

Loo, how Fortune chaunge can hir tides!
 To oon this day she can be fauourable,
 Make capteyns & thes grete guides,
 Which wende ha founde hir wheel ferme & stable.
 But that she is ay froward & chaungable,
 Freendli to-day, to-morwe at discord, —
 Yiff this be trewe, Siphax can ber record.

Sophonisba then
 married
 Masinissa.
 Lo, how
 Fortune can
 change, —
 friendly to-day,
 to-morrow at
 discord, as
 Syphax can
 testify,

1144

1148

This Siphax was sent out of the toun
 In cheynys bounde withoute mor tarieng,
 And at Tiburny lay fetrid in prisoun,
 Deied at myscheeff, made ther his eendying.
 And for because that he was a kyng,
 The Romeyns made, of marcial pite,
 Hym to be buried withynne ther cite.

for he died a
 prisoner and
 was buried in
 Rome.

1152

[How Nabyn hauyng no title but bi tiramye took
 on him to be kyng of Macedoyne was slayne.]¹

NEXT cam Nabyn, ful pitousli weepyng,
 Tofor Iohn Bochas, which be tiramye
 Off Macedoyne took on hym to be kyng,
 Hauyng no title sauff title of robberie,
 Onli bi force hymself to magnefie;
 Which with strong hand took fals* pociessioun
 For to be crownyd in thilke regioun.

1156

Next appeared
 Nabis, who,
 without title,
 took upon
 him to be king
 of Macedonia,

1160

This Macedoyne, as be old writyngis,
 Whilom was had in ful gret reuerence,
 Because onli it floured in too thynges,
 Bothe in knighthod & souereyn sapience;
 Mars ther bi manhod, Pallas be prudence:
 And whil thes tweyne hadde gouernaunce,
 Of al weelfare thei hadde suffisaunce.

1164

a country that
 flowered in both
 knighthood and
 wisdom.

1168

And whil the noblesse of thes thynges tweyne,
 That is to seyne, the flour of hih clergie,
 The hih renoun most famous & souereyne
 Of marcial prowess & of cheualrie,
 Gouerned that lond bi prudent* policie,
 Than stood that kyngdam, auctours reherse konne,
 Among the Greekis lik an heuenli sonne.

1176

So long as
 these two
 things lasted,
 that kingdom
 was as a sun
 to Greece.

1172

1144. thes] othir H. 1145. ferme] firme R — ferme &] om. J, P.

1156. Nabis P. 1158. to] om. R. 1146. that] om. R.

1161. fals] ful B, R, J. 1163. Lacedemoine P.

1167. Pallas] Pallas ther H.

1174. prudent] newe B, J, P, new R.

¹ MS. J. leaf III recto.

But finally its
light was
darkened, when
covetousness
and tyranny
entered,

But at the laste eclipsed was the liht
Bothe of knihthod and philosophie,
Whan couetise gan entren ageyn riht
For to vsurpe upon the regalie,
By* intrusioun of fals[e] tirannye,
And bextort force made ther entrynges,
Hauyng no tittle ther to* regne as kynges.

[p. 273]

1180

chief cause why
the noblesse of
Greece was
brought low.

This was cheef cause, for short conclusioun,
That the noblesse of Grece was brouht[e] bas,
And Macedoyne brouht to confusioun
Be couetise, that set hem in such caas,
Wherby* ther knihthod fulli translatid was
And ther policie, in cronicle ye may see,
Out of Grece to Rome the cite.

1184

1188

One of their
tyrants was
Nabis, hated by
Rome

And among other, bi cleer remembra[u]nce,
Of such tirauntis bi ordre rehersyng,
Nabyn was oon, that hadde gouernaunce
In Macedoyne, & was ther crownyd kyng,
Withoute tittle falsli ther regnyng.
And for his froward contagious cruelte
He was behatid of Rome the cite.

1192

1196

as well as by
his own subjects.
He was first
attacked
by Titus
Flaminius,

The Romeyns sente a myhti consuleer,
Titus Flaminius, of ther werris guide;
To Macedoyne he gan approche neer,
Toward Argos wher Nabyn dede abide,
Of entent[e] for tabate his pride.
But whil Nabyn stood hiest in estat,
Of Grece his lieges wer with hym at debat.

1200

1204

and in the
end overthrown
by Philopomen
and slain by
Alexamenus.

A duk Icallid P[h]ilopomones,
With the peeple that duëllid in Grece-lond,
To stryue with Nabyn put hymself in pres,
Disconfited hym, fihthyng hond of hond;
And at gret myscheeff, ye shal vndirstond,
Alexamenes, a kniht of that contre,
Slouh this Nabyn, the cronicle ye may see.

1208

1177. 2nd the] ther H.

1181. By] But B, R, J.

1182. force] wrong H, R 3.

1183. to] for to B, R 3.

1184. cheef] om. H.

1188. Whereby] Therbi B, R, J.

1205. A] And R.

1209. at] a H 1211. cronicle] story H.

[Here Bochas reherceth the mortal werrys betwix
Romeyns & Affricanys.]¹

¶ Afftir this Nabyne, Bochas doth proceede
To telle the werris & the mortal stryues.

1212 Bochas now
proceeds to tell
about the wars
between Rome
and Carthage.

Tween Romeyns & Affricanys in deede,
Wherbi ful many loste ther her lyues.

Caused wydwes, maydnes & eek wyues

1216

To weepe and waile, in such disioynt thei stood,
On outhir parti to seen the losse of blood.

For the parti of them off Roome toun

Wer maad capteyns & dyuers officeres,

Which into Affrik with peeple wer sent doun.

And speciali ther wer too consuleeris,

Notable in armys and famous in tho yeeris:

Marcus Manlius, born of the Romeyn lyne;

The tothir callid Lucyus Consoryne.

Among the
Roman captains
1220 were Marcus
Manlius, Lucius
Censorinus and
Scipio.

1224

With them was sent a tribun ful notable,

Of whom tofforn I made mencion,

For the werris most worthi & most hable,

1228

I meene of Rome prudent Scipion,

Which of ther cite was cheuest champioun,

Of hool entent thaffricanys tanoye,

And speciali Cartage to destroye.

1232

And nih be Cartage ther was a cite strong,

Mihtili bilt, & stood upon the se,

The wallis thikke, round[e], squar & long,

Cheeff diffense callid of that contre,

To saue & keepe hem from al aduersite.

And fourti cubitis, with crestis marcial,

Lik as I fynde, of heihte was the wal.

Near by
Carthage
was a strong
city upon the
sea, the chief
1236 defence of
that country.

And in the frount, reised for the werre,

Of stonis squar[e] was an hih dongoun

Callid Birsā; fro which wonder ferre

Men myhte beholde the contres enviroun.

And, as I reede, for ther sauacioun

Thaffricanys of purpos did ordeyne

For ther capteyns Hastrubalis tweyne.

1240 In it was a
high keep
called Byrsa.
The Africans
chose two
Hasdrubals to
be their
1244 captains.

1215. Wherbi] Therbi R.

1217. thei] the R. 1225. Censoryne P.

1231. the Affricans P.

1242. from R.

¹ MS. J. leaf III recto.

Scipio laid
siege to Byrsa
and broke down
part of the wall,

The said[e] dongoun, myhtili batailed,
Ageyn al sautis to stonden & endure: 1248
But worthi Scipioun, for al that, hath nat failed
For taproche & doon bi besi cure,
With his engynes myhti, strong & seure;
So that be force, this kniht most marciall, 1252
A gret quantite brak down of the wall.

while Lucius and
Marcus went
forth to give
battle to
one of the
Hasdrubals,

And Lucyus, callid Sensoryne,
Departid is with Marcus Manlius,
And bi the counsail of Scipioun & doctryne, 1256
Bothe of assent, in armis vertuous,
Thei took ther way, myn auctour tellith thus,
With Hastrubal, sothli & thei myhte,
Wher as he lay that same day to fihte. 1260

whom they
defeated and
slew together
with 40,000
Carthaginians
in Cirra.

Thes consuleris assailed the cite [p. 274]
Callid Cirie, & beet adoun the wall,
Slouh fourti thousand, the cronicle ye may see,
Of Affricannys be vengauunce ful mortall. 1264
And ther constable callid Hastruball
Was slayn that day bi them*, it is no doute,
That he most trustid & next wer hym aboute.

In the mean-
while Scipio
entered Carthage
and took all
the inhabitants
prisoner,

And in this while, most manli of corage, 1268
The worthi tribun, Publius Scipioun,
Bi verray force is entrid in Cartage;
And sixe daies, as maad is mencioun,
He and his knihtis constreyned so the toun, 1272
That disespeired, with ther dedli cheeris,
Thei of the toun yald[e] hem prisoneeris,

who begged that
they might be
allowed to live
in servage and
pay the Romans
a tribute.

Meekli requeryng vnto Scipioun,
To resceyue hem in this mortal rage; 1276
That men & wommen duellyng in that toun
With the citeseyns, yong & old of age,
Mihthe abide & lyuen in seruage
Vnder the Romeyns, ther was no bet reffut, 1280
And yeer bi yeer paie hem a tribut.

1248. assautis H.

1251. engynes] Inmyes H. 1253. the] ther H.

1254. Censoryne H. 1259. Hasdruball P.

1262. Cyrra P.

1266. them] hym B, R, him J, P.

1273. dispeired R.

1278. the] om. H.

And of Affrik the tothir Hastruball,
Which among hem afforn was crownid kyng,
Lefft his estat and his poweer roiall,
Yald hym prisoneer, humbeli knelyng.
And his wiff most pitousli weepyng,
Whan that she sauh hir lord was take so,
Ran inta* fire & brent hirsilff for wo.

1284 The other
Hasdrubal gave
himself up to
the Romans;
and his wife
ran into a fire
for sorrow and
burnt herself
up.

Sixe and twenti thousand, as I fynde,
Wer lad of wommen into captyuyte;
Thretti thousand of men cam behynde,
Take prisoneres in gret aduersite.
And seuteene daies brente that cite,
That in ther wallis was non so harde ston,
But into pouder it was brent anon.

1288 26,000 women
and 30,000 men
were captured,
and the city
destroyed.

And this was doon, breeffli to conclude,
Bi the prowess of Publius Scipioun.
Sold in seruage was a gret multitude;
Ther old[e] lordis lad fetrid to prisoun.
This was of Cartage fynal destruccioun, —
To write ther compleyntis Bochas abit no while,
But into Grece turneth ageyn his stile,

1292

1296 It was by the
prowess of
Publius Scipio
that the fall
of Carthage
was accom-
plished.

[How kyng Perseus bi Romayns was outraied &
after taken.]¹

IN Lacedemoyne remembryng o[f] a kyng
Callid Perseus, a ful proud werreieur,
Cleymyng a title, upon hym vsurpyng
For to succeede as trewe enheritour
To grete Alisandre, most myhti conquerour,
Fulli affermyng, ageyn a certeyn day
He wil be crowned maugre who seith nay.

1304 There was once
a king of
Sparta named
Perseus, who
usurped the
crown after the
death of
Alexander.

And his name to putte in memorie,
Caste in his persone renewe the prowess
Of kyng Alisaundre, & tencrece his glorie,
To folwe his traxis in kniethod & noblesse.
And first of alle, of hasti wilfulnesse,
That his conquest myhte sprede ferre,
Gan of purpos with Romeyns to haue werre.*

1308

1312 He first made
war on Rome,
for he was
ambitious to
follow in
Alexander's
footsteps;

1288. inta] in to the R, into B, P, in to J, into a R 3, in taffryk
H 5.

1289. twenti] thritty H. 1301. compleynt H.

1304. Parseus R. 1305. title] tithe H. 1309. seith] say H.

1316. werre] a werre B.

¹ MS. J. leaf 111 verso.

but when he realized the power of the Romans he grew afraid and sent envoys to make peace.

But aftir this he was bet auised,
Whan he parceyued the marcial apparaille
Of the Romeyns, wheroff he was agrised,
Wex afferd ther noblesse to assaille, 1320
Which ay wer founde victorious in bataille.
And wher he had afforn* be rek[e]les,
Sent enbassatours with them to trete of pes.

The Romans saw how presumptuous he was, and sent Sulpicius, who treated his embassy with contempt.

Thei hadde apparceyued his presumpcioun, 1324
And how he was proud and surquedous.
Sent a consul with a gret poweer down,
The name of whom was Sulpicius,
Which dedli hatid the said[e] Perseus, 1328
Thoruh hertli rancour ageyn hym wex soleyn,
Of his ambassiat hauyng but disdeyn.

Paulus Æmilius was also sent against him by Rome; and the night after his arrival the moon eclipsed,

And ther parti for to fortefie
With the said consul Sulpicius, 1332
Thei sent another, expert in cheualrie,
A consul also, Paulus Emylius,
Among Romeyns notable & famous.
And folwyng aftir, the silue same niht, 1336
The moone eclipsed fulli of his liht.

a token that Perseus should be vanquished.

A cleer tokne, as maad is menciou[n],
That kyng Perseus should haue a sharp[e] shour,
And that his lordshepe & his regeoun 1340
Sholde been oppressid, void of al socour,
And that Macedonoys shold haue no fauour
Ageyn the Romeyns togidre whan thei mette
With round[e] speris & suerdis sharpe whette. 1344

Perseus was put to flight by a young knight called Cato;

The day of bataille, to his encre[s] of glorie, [p. 275]
For the parti of them off Rome toun,
Ther was a kniht that caused the victorie,
Yong, fressh and lusti, & callid was Catoun, 1348
Which brouht ther enmyes to confusioun;
For Macedonoys thoruh his gret[e] myht
Outraied wern, & Perseus put to fliht.

and afterwards he and his two sons were made prisoners by a captain called Octavius.

But Emylius, the noble consuleer, 1352
Sente a capteyn callid Octauyus
To pursue afftir in coostis ferr & neer
The proude kyng, this said[e] Perseus.

1322. he had afforn] afforn he hadde B, R, J, afore he had P.

1330. enbassat R, H, R 3, Ambassat J, embassade P.

1342. fauour] socour R.

1353. callid is repeated in H.

And he was take, for ther was no rescus,
 With his sonis, that wer in noumbre tweyne,
 Phelipp, Alisaundre, the stori is certeyne. 1356

MYN auctour heer tellith of kynges manye,
 Thretti in noumbre: the firste Geramus, 1360
 Which haue regned *withyne* Macedonye;*
 And laste of alle was this Perseus.

My author says
 that thirty kings
 reigned in
 Macedonia, and
 that Perseus was
 the last of them.

The noumbre of yeeris, Bochar writeth thus,
 Was nyne hundrid, as is remembred heer, 1364
 Space of ther regnyng, *with* foure & tuenti yeer.

Aftir translatid was the regeoun,
 With al ther iles, vnto thobeissaunce
 Of them of Rome, withoute excepcioun;
 The* grete lordis that wer of most puisaunce 1368
 Abood[e] ther long vndir gouernaunce,
 And Perseus, disconsolat of cheer,
 Duryng his lyff abood ther prisoneer. 1372

They reigned
 924 years, and
 afterwards their
 country was
 translated to
 Rome.

[How the peple of Achaia, with ther cheef Cite
 Corynthe by Romayns was destroyed.]¹

THUS the lordshepe wered out & spent
 Of Macedoyne, as maad is menciou.
 Ther wer too contres therto adiacent,
 The ton Achaia, a litil regeoun,
 And Spartanoy* goyng enviroon,
 Mihti of peple and of gret substaunce,
 In oon confederat & of oon alliaunce.

There were two
 countries near
 Macedonia,
 Achaea and
 Sparta, which
 were bound
 together in an
 alliance.

Thei wer conioyned & bothe maad al oon
 Bi a maner feithful convencioun.
 And when the Romeyns knew hem for ther foon,
 Hauyng ther frenshipec in suspicioun,
 Thei caste to make a disiunccioun 1384
 Atween thes londis, in breede & eek in lengthe;
 For thyng disseuered is menused of his strengthe.

As they were
 enemies of
 Rome, the
 Romans sought
 to sow dis-
 sension between
 them;

Ordeyned cites and toun[e]s heer & yonder,
 Wheron the Romeyns gan make a decre, 1388
 That ther lordshepes sholde be sette assonder,

but the people
 threatened to
 rise against the
 Roman
 messengers,

1359. tellith heer R, J, telleth here P. 1361. Macedoyne B.

1369. The] To B, J, P.

1377. Spartanoy] Spathanoy B, Spatanoy R, H, R 3, Spar-
 tanois J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 112 recto.

Which made the peeple in eueri gret cite,
 Whan thei knew ther fals subtilite,
 To rise attonys, most cruel of ther cheeris, 1392
 And wolde ha slayn the Romeyn massageris.

and finally the
 Romans, losing
 patience, sent
 down a consul
 called Mummius
 against Achaea.

And fynalli bi this occasioun
 Romeyns ageyn hem gan wexen furious,
 Took hardynesse off ther dyuisioun;
 And a consul callid Munius, 1396
 A manli kniht, in armis ful famous,
 Into Achaia was fro Roome sent
 It to destroye bi gret ausement. 1400

The Achaeans
 in their pride
 entered the
 field without
 preparation,
 and set their
 wives and
 women on a
 high mountain
 to see the battle.

Thei of Achaia bi ther negligence,
 And bi ther froward wilful reklesnesse,
 Of verray pride list make no diffence;
 Thouhte themsilff, withoute auisynesse, 1404
 Off poweer able, & strengre in sothnesse
 Than wer[e] Romeyns, veraili in deede:
 Thus wer thei stroied afforn or thei took heede.

Thei stood in hope in ther sturdynesse 1408
 Bi that bataille to haue had gret pillage,
 Of the Romeyns to ha[ue] won[n]e gret richesse.
 And for a pompe, of wilful fals dotage
 Thei took ther wyues and wommen yong off age, 1412
 And set hem up on an hih mounteyn,
 That ther manhod myhte in the feeld be seyn.

But the Romans
 slew their
 troops like
 cattle and
 carried off the
 women and
 children to
 Rome.

Whan the Romeyns mette hem in bataille,
 Thei dispurueied and out off ordenaunce, 1416
 Slayn lik beestis, ther poweer gan to faille,
 Of froward pride & rekles gouernaunce,
 That Achaia was brouht to myschaunce;
 Wommen and childre, for sorwe almost mad, 1420
 To lyue in seruage wer to Rome lad.

Corinth was
 destroyed, chief
 market of its
 time;

Corynthe that tyme was ther cheef cite,
 Destroyed be Romeyns & brouht vnto ruine,
 Which among citees, in Bochas ye may see, 1424
 Aboue alle othir dide in honour shyne;
 Of alle sciences ther floured the doctrine,
 And of crafftis artificeres most wise,
 Rekne al the world, ther was cheef marchau[n]dise. 1428

Thus vnwarli in ther most noblesse,
 Sittyng of Fortune on the [hihest] stage,
 Thei wer destroyed of tresor & richesse,
 Brouhte to nouht bi slauhtre & pillage,
 Ther wallis broke in that cruel rage.
 And in that brennyng, Bochas seith, the leuene
 Rauht a gret part upward to the heuene.

[p. 276] and Bochas says
 that the flames
 rose high in
 the sky.

1432

Pleyn with the erthe the wallis broke doun,
 The peple slayn merciles, yong & old;
 And ther was maad a gret dyuisioun:
 Summe lad in seruage, & somme of them wer sold.
 Images of coper, of syluer & of gold
 Wer sodenli, in al that violence,
 Togidre molte, so hoot was the feruence.

1436 The walls were
 levelled and the
 people
 mercilessly slain
 or sold into
 bondage.

1440

Of which metal thus afftir it is fall,
 Gold, siluer, coper, medlid into oon,
 Coper of Corynthe men sothli dede it call,
 Thoruh al the world of custum euerichon.
 Fame of which metal is so ferr Igon,
 That the vessellis forgid of the same
 Corynthoise Icallid is by* name.

1444 The statues of
 bronze and
 the images of
 gold and silver
 melted and
 flowed together
 into a mixture
 afterwards
 called Copper
 of Corinth.

1448

¶ Afftir Corynthe was thus brent to nouht,
 A prynce callid Philipp Philermene
 To Iohn Bochas hath his compleynt brouht,
 In whos face and cheer it was weel seene,
 The woful constreynt of his mortal teene.
 And he was whilom, Bochas doth specefie,
 Lord of a cite callid Vallaquye.

1452 After the
 destruction of
 Corinth,
 Philip
 Philermene
 made his
 complaint to
 Bochas.

1456

Marcus Actilius took hym prisoneer,
 Brouht hym to Roome, list hym nat respite.
 ¶ Next* to [Iohn] Bochas, with an heuy cheer,
 Appeerid a duc* callid Democrite.
 Of Etholis, myn auctour doth so write,
 He was cheeff lord; but he & his contre
 Translatid wern to Roome the cite.

1460 He was brought
 prisoner to
 Rome by
 Marcus Atilius,
 as was also
 Duke
 Democritus
 of Aetolia,

1430. of Fortune on the hihest] hihest of Fortune in the H, P,
 hihest of Fortune on the R 3, H 5 — on] in J, R — hihest]
 hih R.

1441. that] ther R. 1444. medlid] Ioyned H, R 3.

1449. callid H, called P — by] the B, R, J.

1459. The paragraph mark is misplaced before the next line, B —
 John] om. R, J, P, H 5, R 3 — an] om. H, R 3, H 5.

1460. duc] kniht B, R, J, P — Domocrite R, J, Damocrite P.

1461. Elholoys H.

who escaped
once and,
retaken, went
mad and slew
himself.

This duk was cast and cheyned in prisoun, 1464
Escapid onys, in stori as I fynde,
Take ageyn, throwe in a derk dongoun,
Ther for sorwe wente out of his mynde,
Slouh hymselff at myscheeff ageyns kynde — 1468
Loo, hou thes princis proud & rek[e]les
Haue shamful eende, which cannat lyue in pes!

[How grete Anthiocus vsyng riot and viciuos lyu-
yng/ bi marchus Actilius was outraied & deied
sodenly.]¹

The story of
Seleucus and
Antiochus,
of Laodicea and
the ring

TOUCHYNG þe stori in ordre heer folwyng
Of Seleuchus & gret Anthiochus, 1472
Off his mooder Laodices & þe ryng,
With other toknes & signes merueillous,
And how also the famous* Seleuchus
Hadde in his theih, as writen is heer-toform, 1476
Preent of an anker the day whan he was born,

and the print of
the anchor,
which descended
to all the
children, was
told in the
Fourth Book.

And al the childre bi successioun
Hadde be discent, bor[e]n of his lynage,
Preent of an anker, as maad is mencionn, 1480
The fourte book, with al the surplusage
Of othir toknis ther told in pleyn langage.
And of the seide same Seleuchus
Cam be discent the saide Antiochus. 1484

Another
Antiochus,
a descendant of
Seleucus,

Whos herte was set of hih[e] couetise
To folwe his lustis and delectacioun[s];
And specialli he caste gan & deuise,
To wynne in Grece dyuers regions. 1488
And of the peeple he cauhte occasiouns,
Bi ther fauour to conquere that* contre
And to rebelle ageyn Rome the cite.

rebelled against
the Romans and
conquered many
of their towns
in Greece;

With multitude & gret apparaille 1492
He gat in Grece castellis & eek touns
Longyng to Roome, conquered be bataille;
Took upon hym in his presumpciouns
Falsli to folwe the inclynaciouns 1496
Of his berthe, whil he dede abide
In a cite that callid was Calcide.*

1475. famous] same B.

1480. an] om. R.

1483. same saide H.

1486. delectacioun R.

1490. that] ther B, R.

1498. Talcide B, R, J, Ealcide H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 112 verso.

For cause of slouthe he leffte his cheualrie,
 Forsook[e] Mars & took hym to Cupide,
 Restyng the wyntir, he spent in lecherie,
 In wach and riot, ches Venus to his guide:
 Sensualite maad resoun stonde aside;
 And bi thes menys, for short conclusioun,
 He was conveied to his destruccioun.

but he soon
 grew slothful,
 and, forsaking
 Mars, betook
 himself to
 Cupid, and
 spent the winter
 in lechery.

1500

1504

And whan that wyntir *with* his frostis colde
 Ipassid was and al his stormys keene,
 In riot spent and wastid, as I tolde,
 And ver cam in *with* his newe greene,
 And fressh[e] Flora, which is of flouris queene,
 Off custum gynneth hir motles out to dresse, —
 In which[e] sesoun, as auctours alle expresse,

When spring
 came with
 Flora and her
 fresh flowers,

1508

Kynges, princis, with marcial apparaille,
 Tyme whan Phebus in the Ram doth shyne,
 Thei hem dispose to gon out to bataille,
 For exercise of marcial disciplyne.
 And doun fro Roome, expert in that doctryne,
 Descendid is Marchus Actilius
 Ageyn this vicious proude Anthiochus.

1512

[p. 277] and Phoebus
 shone in the
 Ram, Marcus
 Atilius
 descended
 down from
 Rome with his
 army,

1516

This noble Mark, preued in armis weel,
 Which in his tyme was soo good a kniht,
 With al his hoost[e], armyd in briht steel,
 Ageyn Antiochus *cam* to the feeld doun riht,
 Vpon a morwe whan Phebus shon ful briht.
 Set his watdeyns be capteyns that he ches
 Vpon an hill callid Termophiles.

1520

1524

Antiochus upon the tothir side,
 Whom glotonye & riot dede oppresse,
 And dronke Bachus, which *with* hym dide abide,
 With Morpheus wiff, of slombre cheeff goddesse, —
 Which caused hym thoruh slouthe & idilnesse
 That prouidence out of his court was gon,
 Causyng that day the slaughtre of many on.

and the
 gluttonous,
 riotous
 Antiochus was
 defeated and
 forced to flee

1528

1532

Whan the consul, Marchus, the worthi knyht,
 His aduersaries proudli gan assaille,
 Thei vnpurueied, took hem to the fliht;
 Disaraied thei myhte nat auaile.
 Thus Anthiochus fledde out of bataille;

1536

For ageyn Romeyns he myht nat endure:
 Therfore on hym fill the disconfiture.

1540

to Ephesus.
 He tried to
 make peace, but
 was rebuffed.

Thus rebukid fledde to Ephesie,
 Ferr in Grece, and ther to duelle he ches,
 Sente Romeyns a gret embassatrie
 With said[e] Marchus for to trete of pes.
 But his* embassiat, this verray dout[e]les,
 Whan thei atteyned of Marchus the presence,
 Wer refusid & hadde non audience.

1544

Greatly
 mortified, he
 then began a
 war against
 Rome on the
 sea

Of which Antiochus gretli was a-shamed,
 Caste ageyn Roome of hate & enmyte
 To reise a poweer, & hath of newe attamyd
 To gadre shippis & make a gret arme,
 Gynne a werre ageyn hem on the se,
 Hauyng an hope, vndir a coward dreede,
 Bet on the watir than on the lond to speede.

1548

1552

and was
 beaten three
 times.

Made his shippis be stuffed with vitaille,
 And his capteyns han the lond forsake;
 But whan the Romeyns gan hym of newe* assaille,
 His shippis brent & al his stuff was take.
 And lik myn auctour compendiously doth make,
 Thries on the se the Romeyns werreyng,
 He was outraied, the stori witnessyng.

1556

1560

Once more he
 fought the
 Romans on
 land with
 chariots set
 with scythes,

Yit efft ageyn to his confusioun
 Vpon the lond[e] he gan make* hym strong,
 Mette with Cornelie callid Scipioun,
 With waynes, cartes maad for the werre long,
 Shod with hard iren, sharp sithes set among
 In trauers wise bi gret ordenaunce;
 But for al that, he was brouht to myschaunce.

1564

1568

and elephants,
 and again he
 was compelled
 to flee and was
 finally obliged
 to pay a
 tribute to
 Rome.

With olyfauntis & castellis on the[r] bak
 That day was slayn many a worthi kniht,
 Vpon his host so cruel was the wrak,
 That he constreyned took hym to the fliht,
 Forsook the contre, fledde out of mennys siht.
 To the Romeyns, he coude it nat delaie,
 Ech yeer constreyned a tribut for to paie.

1572

1544. of] *om.* R. 1545. his] in this B, R, J, P.
 1548. which] *pe* which H. 1551. the shippis R.
 1554. *In reading MS. H., turn back to leaf 105.*
 1557. gan hym of newe] of newe gan hym B, R, J, P.
 1563. maken B. 1565. the] their H.
 1569. their] the R, J. 1572. hym to] vn to H.
 1573. the] his H.

But he of fraude, because of his tribut
 For couetise feyned sore pouerte,
 Gadred robbours, & be fals pursut
 Oppressid marchauntis, spoiled the contre,
 Robbed templis, of hatful cruelte,
 And fro Iubiter callid Dodonyan*
 Took alle the reliques, the story telle can.

1576 He then began
 to rob mer-
 chants and
 temples,

Dide sacrilege & entrid in that cloos
 Withoute reuerence or any obseruaunce,
 For which the temple ageyn[es] hym aroos,
 And, as it is put in remembraunce,
 Bi the goddis ther fill a gret vengauce
 Vpon this tiraunt, quakyng in his dreed, —
 Al sodenli he fill to grounde ded.

1580

1584 and at last
 fell dead while
 in the act of
 despoiling the
 temple of
 Jupiter of
 Dodona.

1588

¶ *Lenvoye.*

THIS tragedie of Anthiochus,
 Who list in ordre his froward stori see,
 First to al vertu he was contrarious,
 And rebel euer to Roome the cite,
 Iustli accusid of vicious thynges thre:
 Of pride, slouthe and of glotonye,
 And of disordynat superfluite,
 Of niht excesse, riot and lecherie.

[p. 278] This froward
 tragedy of
 Antiochus,
 who was justly
 1592 accused of
 pride, sloth,
 gluttony, riot
 and excess,

1596

On hym the Romeyns wer victorious
 Twies on the lond [and] onis on the se,
 He was nat hardi, but malicious;
 In eueri bataile his custum was to flee.
 Wher vices regnē ther may no grace bee;
 To al surfetis his lust he dede applie,
 Noised and disclaundred thoruhout his contre
 Of niht excesse, riot and lecherie.

1600 and everywhere
 beaten by the
 Romans and
 always forced
 to flee, shews
 that where
 vices reign
 there is no
 grace.

1604

Among his lieges wood & despitous,
 And for a coward knowe in the feeld was he;
 The poore toppresse a wolff most furious,
 And be deceit a fox for subtilite:
 No man mor froward, of hih nor louh degre,
 Nor mor delityng in falsheed nor flatrie.

1608 Cruel to
 his subjects
 and a coward,
 no man was
 more perverse
 or fond of
 falsehood and
 flattery; and
 his end was
 sudden death.

1576. his] that R, om. H, this R 3.

1577. sore] om. H. 1581. Dodovian H, R 3, Dodavian R, Do-
 doncan P, Dodouyan, B, H 5.

1585. temple] peple H.

1598. *This and the next stanza are transposed in R.*

1605. riot] pride R.

What was his eende? a sodeyn deth, parde, 1612
For his outrages of pride & lecherie.

Noble Princes,
remember that
if you are
virtuous you
will prosper.
Antiochus was
cast down for
his pride, riot
and lechery.

Noble Princis, of prudence ful famous,
In al your grettest roial mageste,
Remembreth pleyntli, yif ye be vertuous, 1616
Ye shal perseuere in long prosperite,
Wher the contrarie causeth aduersite,
As this stori afforn doth specefie
Of Anthiochus, cast from his dignite 1620
For his gret pride, riot & lecherie.

¶ Explicit.

[How Ieronimus of Ciracuse kyng was slayn, and
how Scipio Affrican that labored for common
wele of Romayns was exilid bi them and so
deied.]¹

After the death
of Antiochus,
came Hieron of
Syracuse, who
was innocently
slain together
with his three
dear sisters by
his hateful
subjects.

AFFTIR the deth of this Antiochus,
Ther cam a prince to Bochas compleynyng,
Which that callid was* Ieronimus, 1624
Of Siracuse whilom lord & kyng.
Which of his lieges, he nothyng trespacyng,
Islay[e]n was with his thre sustren deere
Of hatrede, myn auctour writ so heere. 1628

The people of
Syracuse were
fickle and in
the habit of
killing their
kings on
occasion, so
that they
could have
a new one.

Siracusany hadde a condicioun,
Thoruh chaunges newe ay to been vnstable,
Of wilful malis void of al resoun
On ther kynges for to be vengable; 1632
Thei loued nat to han hem perdurable,
But eueri yeer of custum, this is trewe,
Them to gouerne to han a prince newe.

And since they
were forever
fighting and
unfruitful in
their lives, I
shall pass over
and speak of
the Scipios.

And for ther chaunges & ther vnkouth stryues, 1636
With variaunce of ther condiciouns,
Because no frut is founde in ther lyues,
Nor in ther stories nor ther* successiouns,
I will passe ouer & speke of Scipiouns, 1640
And first to write of the worthi man
Callid in his tyme Scipio Affrican.

1624. was callid B, R, J — Ieromyus H, Ieromynus R 3, Hieronimus P.

1627. thre] om. R. 1639. ther] in ther B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 recto.

A famous kniht in al[le] naciouns
 For his conquest, shortli to conclude,
 Which hadde brouht ful many regiouns,
 Mor be wisdom than be multitude,
 Tobeie the Romeyns; but for ingratitude,
 Which that he fond in hem, as I reede,
 How he wrouhte to telle I wil proceede.

Scipio
 Africanus was
 a wise and
 famous knight
 whom the
 Romans treated
 with great
 ingratitude,
 1644
 1648

It is remembrid of his worthynesse,
 Whil that he was flouryng in yong age,
 How Roome was maad[e] ladi and maistresse
 Of many a lond[e], to ther auauntage.
 And specialli al Affrik & Cartage
 Bi his prowessse, as maad is mencioun,
 Wer brouht of Romeyns vnder subieccioun.

although it
 was he who
 brought so
 many lands
 under their
 subjection.
 1652

But thei ageynward wer to hym vnkynde,
 Bi accusacioun[s] founde out bi ther falsnessis,
 Saide ageyn hym, as it is put in mynde,
 Be record of many fals witnessis,
 That he shold haue besiled the richessis
 Of Cartage & Affrik the contre,
 Which appartened to Roome the cite.

They falsely
 accused him
 of misappropriating
 their
 wealth of
 Carthage and
 Africa.
 1660

But ageynward this noble Affrican
 Proudli gaff ansuere to his accusours:
 He neuer withheeld fro tyme that he began
 Toward hymself no part of ther tresours,
 Sauf as the maner is of conquerours,
 For to conserue his worshep & his name,
 As most was proffit to the toun[e]s fame.

But noble
 Africanus
 answered them
 proudly that
 he never took
 more than was
 necessary
 1664
 1668

This is to meene, pleyntli & nat tarie,
 He neuer acrochid tresour nih nor ferre
 Toward hymself, but that was necessarie
 For ther worshep to meynteene with the werre.
 And yit that tyme he was ther lodesterre,
 Tenrece ther boundis, & fulli his delit
 Was al hool set to the comoun proffit.

[p. 279] for the
 maintenance of
 the war.
 1672

1676

1651. yong] om. H.

1652. maistresse] pryncesse H, R 3.

1653. lond] toun & londe H.

1658. accusaciouns] occasiouns H — falsnessis] falsnesse J, P,
 falsnes R 3.

1660. wytnes R 3. 1661. riches R 3. 1662. &] in R.

1674. the] ther H, R, J, P.

Their malicious
ingratitude
drove him into
voluntary exile.

He took non heed of al the surplusage
Of ther tresours nor ther gret richesse,
The name reserued of Affrik & Cartage
To his knythod and his hih noblesse.
But ther malicious expert vnkyndenesse
Was in cause, breeffli to compile,
His bodi fro them perpetueli textile.

1680

1684.

and resolving
never again to
appear in Rome
he abode in
a small village.

Cast hym neuer withynne Roome toun
Aftir that day among hem to be seyn,
Vnkyndenesse gaff hym occasioun
Tabente his persone, & of hih disdeyn
Texile hymself & neuer come ageyn,
But for tabide in a smal village
Callid Lynterne, whan he was falle in age.

1688

He wrote his
own epitaph,
saying that
neither his
bones nor his
ashes should
ever repose
within the walls
of Rome.

And for men sholde mynde vpon hym haue
Bi a maner of indignacioun,
An epitaphie he sette upon his graue, —
Which seide thus to them of Roome toun:
“O peepke vnkynde, vnkynde ageyn resoun,
My funerall asshes nor my bonis dede
In thi wallis thou neuer shalt posseede.

1692

1696

“My bones
shall not rest
in thy froward
ground, and the
remembrance of
thine ingrati-
tude shall be
known far and
wide by this
small inscrip-
tion cut on
my tomb.

In thyn vnkynde froward teritorie
My bonys shal nat resten nor abide;
But thyn vnkyndenesse to putten in memorie,
The remembraunce shal be rad ful wide
Of thes lettres graue, on eueri side,
Be report onli of this smal scripture,
Which heer is set upon my sepulture.

1700

1704

“That is why
my funeral was
held in exile,
although I did
so much for
the community.”

Loo, heer the cause, be brief descripcioun
Set on my graue for a memoriall,
Whi that my bonys out of Roome toun
Been buried heer lowe vnder this wall,
In exil holde my feeste funerall, —
Vnkyndenesse me droff from* that cite,
That wrouhte so moche for the comounte.”

1708

1712

1684. frome H.

1690. tabide] to dwell H.

1698. shalt] shall H, R 3.

1702. The] To R.

1711. from] out of B, R, J, P, out fro H 5, fro R 3.

[How Scipio Asian lord of Asia pat labored euer for
the comon wele was mordred.]¹

AFTIR the eende of this Affrican,
Callid in his tyme worthi Scipioun,
Cam next his brothir, Scipio Asian,
Which in Asia hadde domynacioun.
Geyn whom was made an accusacioun
To al the senat, that he vntreuli sholde
Certeyn tresours toward hymself withholde,

Which that he in Asia hadde wonne
In his conquest be many strong bataille.
Which accusacioun falsli was begonne
Of old envie, causeles, this no faile;
Whos worthynesse ful mekil dede auaille
To comoun proffit, be thes too conquerours,
Bi gret richesse encresyng ther tresours.

The ton in Affrik, as ye haue herd me tell,
Bi his wisdam & his cheualrie,
The tothir in Asia, which dede excell
In hih prowessse, as bookes specefie.
Falsli hyndred of hatreede & envie,
Bi compassyng of oon Anthiochus,
Hym to destroe he was so desirous.

Natwithstandyng thes tweyne Scipiouns
Hadde in ther tyme, be manyfold batailles,
Brouht into Roome so many regiouns
Tobeie ther cite, with marcial apparailles,
And euermor[e] to ther gret auailles
Brouht in tresours tencrece with ther toun,
Yit han thei wrouhte to ther destruccioun.

The ton in exil, as maad is mencion,
Deied, alas, whan that he was old;
The second was moordred in prisoun:
Ther bothe stories remembrid heer & told
To yue exaample to princis manyfold,
That who that laboureth for a comounte
Leseth ofte his thank, be Scipiouns ye may see.

His brother,
Scipio Asian,
was also
enviously
accused of
appropriating to
himself certain
treasures

1716

which he had
won in Asia,
together
with many
lands, for the
common profit.

1724

And this was
done by the
compassing of
one Anthiochus,
who wished to
destroy him.

1728

1732

Such was the
ingratitude with
which these
two able men
were treated.

1736

1740

Scipio Asian
was murdered
in prison,
Africanus died
in exile; and
their stories
are remembered
here to shew
princes that
those who
labour for the
community
receive small
thanks.

1744

1732. Antiochus H, R, J.

1735; 37, 38. bataille, apparaile, availe H, R 3. 1747. often H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 verso.

[How the Duk philopomones was take, put in prisoun,
affir drank poison and so deied.]¹

Duke
Philopœmen,
who ruled
Messenia during
the war between
Achaea and
Ætolia,

AFFTIR the processe of thes too Scipious, 1748
Atween too peeplis* wilful & rekles
Began in Grece newe discenciouns,
Tween Acheois & Etholois dout[el]les.
And a gret duk Philopomones, 1752
A prince that tyme of ful gret puissance,
Hadde of Messoneys hooli the gouernaunce.

led his own army
into battle on a
fair plain,

This said[e] prince Philopomones, [p. 280]
Leedyng his host upon a ful fair pleyn, 1756
As he rood armed, & put hymself in pres
Mid his peeple as gouernour & wardeyn,
Folk out of reule for to calle ageyn,
Vpon his steede, as he gan hem fette, 1760
In deu ordre his wardes for to sette.

and was
taken captive
by his enemies
and put into
prison where he
died by drinking
poison.

And this prince*, of port most marcial,
In the pursut which that he gan make,
Among his enmyes he hadde a sodeyn fall, 1764
Void of al rescus vnwarli he was take,
Of al his freendis lik a man forsake,
Among his enmyes brouht into prisoun,
Ther maad an eende be drynkyng of poisoun. 1768

He was
succeeded by a
captain called
Lycortas.

Of Philopomones this was the fatal cas,
Out of gouernaunce, his peeple desolat,
Except a capteyn callid Ligorias,
Which in the werris was wonder fortunat, 1772
Of Acheois took on hym the estat,
Them to gouerne & the peeple leede,
Of hym no mor in Bochas I do reede.

[Off the thirde Scipion Nasica that euer wrouht
moche for the comonte.]²

The third
Scipio, Nasica,
surpassed all
other Romans
in wisdom and
courage.

MYN auctour heer maketh a digressioun, 1776
And reherseth for a memorial
Of the thirde worthi Scipiou,
Callid Nasica, which in especiall

1749. peeple B. 1751. Etholois] Messanians P.

1754. Messoneys] Messonoys H, Achaia P.

1758. myddes H. 1759. for] om. R. 1760. his] a H.

1762. this prince] thes princis B. 1763. he] thei H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 113 verso. ² MS. J. leaf 114 recto.

Be disposicioun verray naturall
Hold among Romeyns, bi report of langage,
Passyng al othir in wisdam & corage,

1780

Old of discrecioun & but* yong of yeeris.
For a myracle, myn auctour doth expresse,
Whan senatours sente massageris
Into Frigia bi gret auisynesse
For Berosynthia, most famous goddesses,
Whan she was brouht bi them that ded hir guide, 1788
In hous nor temple she wolde nat abide,

1784 When the
Senate sent
messengers to
Phrygia for
the goddess
Berecynthia,

Sauf in the paleis of this Scipioun,
To putte his name mor in remembraunce.
The which also, thoruh his hih renoun,
Gallobois he brouhte to vttraunce,
A peeple off Grece, ferr out of gouernaunce;
But Scipioun gan hem so werreie,
Maugre ther malis the Romeyns for to obeye. 1796

1792 she would not
abide anywhere
except in
Scipio's house,
which was a
miracle.

Wherbi his name was put in memorie,
And ful gret thank in Roome he hath disserued,
Because onli of this gret victorie,
For which the tryumphe was to hym reserued. 1800
But at the laste ful falsli he was serued
Of the Romeyns aftir ther old maneer,
In this tragedie anon as ye shal heer.

He also brought
the Gallobois to
uttrance, and
deserved great
thanks of Rome
and was given
a triumph;

Aftir he hadde aumentid ther tresours,
Conquered in Asie many regiouns,
Caused of ther faon that thei wer victours,
Appesid of Graccus the fals occasiouns,
Compassed of malis be newe discenciouns
Atween the peeple & also the senat, —
He of hih wisdam hath stynt al that debat. 1804

but at the last
he was treated
with
ingratitude.

Trustyng the Romeyns, Scipioun was begiled,
Loste ther fauour, & offendid nouht;
Be them vnwarli bashed & exiled,
Cleene forgetyn; put out of ther thouht
For comoun proffit al that he hath wrouht.
The guerdoun lost, thowh princis canat see,
Of al that doon for any comounte. 1808

1812 He lost the
favour of the
Romans and
was banished
and forgotten —
the usual reward
of those who
labour for the
common weal.

1816

1783. but] nat but B, R, J, P.

1799. this] his R, J, P — gret] om. H, R 3.

Their popularity
is like a wisp
of flame or a
momentary
glimpse of the
sun through
clouds.

Lik a blase for a w[h]ile liht,*
Which sheweth [ful] cleer & is neuir aftir seyn,
Or lik a sonne for a moment briht, 1820
Vnwarli shroudid with a cloude of reyn,
Riht so the wyndi fauour bloweth in veyn,
May resemble for a mutabilite,
Of them that doon for any comounte. 1824

The people are
as fickle in
their opinions
as so many
Blind Bayards;

The peeple folweth ther owne oppynyouns,
In ther conceitis thei be so wonderful;
Will halt the bridil of ther discreciouns:
Ther hasti deemyng so bestial is & dull, 1828
On blynde Baiard thei braiden at a pull,
To quite the guerdouns of marcial bounte
Of them that doon for any comounte.

the fame of a
prince is lifted
to the stars
to-day and
obscured to-
morrow.

This day a prince stant in the peeplis grace, 1832
Lik as thei wolde his name deifie
Aboue the steris in Iubiteris place,
With Mars & Phebus his name to stellefe;
But be to-morwe ther komth a sodeyn skie, 1836
Shewyng ther is a ful feynt surete
Of them that doon for any comounte.

We need only
remember the
fate of the
three Scipios.

And for tafferme that it is treuli so, [p. 281]
Calle thre Scipiouns [un]to remembraunce: 1840
First of Affrik & Asie, bothe too;
Note in cronicles ther knihtli gouernaunce,
Ther restles labour Romeyns for tauaunce,
Rekne ageynward how thes princis thre 1844
Wer ful vngoodli quit bi the comounte.

¶ Lenvoy.

This tragedy
of these worthy
notable men
who made so
many regions
subject to Rome

THIS tragedie of thre Scipiouns,
[That wer] so worthi in knyhtthod &* notable,
Made so many famous regiouns 1848
Subject to Roome (this stori is no fable),
Wher the Romeyns, double & deceyuable,
Shewed ageynward to thes princis thre,

1818. liht] briht B, H, R, J. 1819. ful] om. R, J, P.

1820. a] be H.

1832. *This stanza and the next are transposed in H.*

1839. it] is H. 1840. unto] to J, P. 1845. quit] om. H.

1847. &] & eek B.

The thank[e] lost & guerdoun couenable 1852
Of hym that doth for any comounte.

Rekne up in Affrik the cites & the touns, in both Africa
Grete Cartage with castellis deffensable; and Asia, with
Rekne in Asie the gret pocessiouns 1856 vast revenues,
With reuenus verray innumerable;

Rekne ther tryumphes of pris incomparable,
Which considred, ye may a merour see,
How the guerdouns be fals & flakisable 1860
Of them that doon for any comounte.

Thei wer whilom the Romeyn champions, and who,
Off senatours to sette the honour stable, once the
Tauoid discord & al discenciouns 1864 champions of
Atween the comouns & statis honourable; their nation,
But she that is of custum ay chaungable, were
Fortune, in whom may be no surete, finally thrown
Sheweth in hir wheel the guerdouns most mutable 1868 down from
Of them that doon for any comounte. Fortune's wheel,

Noble Princis, peiseth in your resouns, shews, Noble
Al worldli thyng in erthe is transmutable, Princes, that all
Feynt & vnseur your domynaciouns, earthly things
Chartre* is ther non to make hem perdurable, are unstable,
Sorwe at departyng your bodies corumpable, even your own
A thyng rassembleyng that neuer hadde be, domination.
Record on Scipiouns be guerdouns rassemblable 1872
Off them that doon for any comounte.

Trusteth neuer in your oppynyouns, Know only that
But that your poweer is ech day remeuable. your power is
Beeth nat maad blynd in your discreciouns, transitory;
But considreth bexaumples resonable, do not allow
The pley of Fortune lik hasard retournable 1880 yourselfes to
With sodeyn chaung of fals felicite, be made blind
Vnto the guerdouns daili comparable to the play
Of them that doon for any comounte. 1884 of Fortune.

¶ Explicit lenvoye.

1858. ther] be H.

1859. ye] I, H.

1870. peiseth] remembrith H.

1873. Chartre] Charite B, R, H, Cherite J, Chartyr H 5, Chartre
R 3, P.

[How Duk Hanyball aftir many victorious dedes
moordred himsilf with poison.] ¹

The famous
prince Hannibal,
who hated the
Romans and
daunted their
power, next
appeared before
Bochas.

NEXT [in ordre] to Bochas, as I reede,
Out of Affrik & Cartage, *perwithal*
Ther cam a duk þat hadde most hatrede 1888
Ageyn the Romeyns in especiall,
This famous prince callid Hanyball,
Bi whos prowesse, as it is weel knowe,
The seid Romeyns wer dauntid & brouht lowe. 1892

Not only did
his horoscope
foretell his
inclinations,

And among othir worthi dukes alle,
As olde cronicles make mencioniun,
Of Hanybal the fate is so befall,
At his berthe bi disposicioun, 1896
That of his natural constellacioun
Set in the heuene, that he sholde bee
Perpetueli enmy to Roome the cite.

but when a boy
he swore that he
would always
be an enemy
of Rome.

As the stori of hym doth deuise, 1900
Whil his fader, duk whilom of Cartage,
Callid Amulchar dede onys sacrificse
To his goddis, & he nyne yeer of age,
Swor & avowed, of herte & of corage, 1904
Duryng his lyff withoute excepcioun
Euer to been enmy vnto Roome toun.

He was the
mighty wall of
Carthage, who,
succeeding to
his father,
Hasdrubal,

This Martis child, this lusti yonge kniht
Was to Cartage the strong[e] myhti wall, 1908
Which succeedid in his fadris riht
Aftir the deth of worthi Hastruball.
First he made a werre ful mortall .
Geyn Saguntynois, as it is specefied, 1912
Cause with Romeyns that thei wer allied.

dreamt that he
should conquer
Spain and
Italy.

A drem he hadde; & was thus in sentence: [p. 282]
That he sholde conquere in bataille, 1916
Maugre al tho that stoden at diffence,
Too myhti contrees, first Spaigne & than Itaille,
Doun descendying with gret apparaille,
Passyng the famous ryueer Iberius,
And wher he rood alway victorious. 1920

1899. enmy] *om.* H.

1902. Amilchar P. 1904. avowed] avoied R.

1910. the] his R. 1912. Saguntines P.

1914. thus] this H, R 3, thys H 5.

1919. hiberus H, R 3, Iberous P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 114 recto.

With hym of Affrik many cheunteyns
 Rood thoruh Gaule, fond no resistence,
 Of Pirenes bi the hih mounteyns
 To shewe the rigour of his magnificence,
 Ouer the Alpies be sturdi violence,
 Natwithstondyng the passage was ful wikke,
 Of slidyng frostis & of snowis thikke.

1924 He first subdued Spain, and, crossing the Pyrenees, rode through Gaul and down over the Alps into Italy,

A gret[e] parti of his men he* loste
 Bi the constreynt of that fell passage,
 Hors, olefauntis, that many besaunt coste,
 Fond gret daunger off them in his cariage.
 Assault of brigauntis, whan thei fond auauntage; 1932
 And as Bochas put in remembraunce,
 Felte gret losse of al his ordenaunce.

1928 losing many of his men and horses and elephants in the passage.

The Alpies passid with trauaile & gret wo,
 This Hanybal with al his cheualrie
 Approched is the ryueer off the Poo,
 Cam to a toun that callid is Cursie,
 Which stant upon the cite of Pauye,
 Wher a consul named* Scipioun
 Gaff hym bataille euene affor the toun.

1936 Approaching the River Po, he defeated Gneus Scipio at Pavia,

The same consul, Gneus Scipioun,
 Which bi prowess* of manli Hanyball
 Was disconfited, as maad is mencion,
 Tofor Pauye hadde a riht foul[e] fall:
 The first victorie in especiall
 That he hadde beyounde the mounteyns,
 Whan he purposed* tassaile the Romeyns.

1940

1944

1948

Sempronyus, a-nother consuleer,
 That was felawe to said[e] Scipioun,
 Sent eek fro Roome with a ful proud cheer
 Geyn Hanyball; but in his comyng doun
 Tofor Tresbie, a large myhti toun,
 Outraied was bi fatal auenture
 And aftir neuer myhte his fall recure.

as well as Sempronyus, who had been sent from Rome against him.

1952

1922. Rood] And R.

1928. men he] peeple B, R, J, P. 1931. Fond] And R.

1938. toun] hil P — Cursie] Curye H, Curye R 3, Currye H 5, Ticinie P.

1939. upon] nighe P. 1940. named] callid B, J, R, P.

1943. prowess] processe B, R, J. 1945. foule] full R.

1948. purposed] pursued B, R, J. 1950. the seyde R.

1951. fro] to R.

Off too consuleris this was the wooful fyn, 1956
 Sempronyus & Gneus Scipioun.
 Ouer the mounteyn callid Appenyn
 Wenten Hanybal, thoruh his hih renoun,
 To gret damage & gret confusioun 1960
 Of his peeple that passid the mounteyns,
 Destroied with cold, gret snowh & hidous reyns.

He then crossed
 the Apennines,
 where many of
 his men died
 of accident and
 exposure. He
 himself escaped
 on an elephant,
 but lost one of
 his eyes.

Loste his knihtis, his tresours & his goodis,
 Ther myht as tho be maad[e] no diffence; 1964
 His grete steedes drowned in the floodes
 Bi the watris myhti violence,
 Fond for the tyme no bettir resistance,
 Sauf he eskaped fro that sodeyn wrak, 1968
 Of an olyfaunt, he ridyng on the bak.

Afterwards he
 defeated and
 slew Flaminius.

So importable was his greuouse peyne,
 Onli born up of marcial corage,
 Yit ther he lost oon of his eyen tweyne, 1972
 Kept of kniethod o cheer & o visage.
 Thoruh Itaille heeld alwey his passage,
 Slouh a consul callid Flaminyus;
 Thus in thre batailles he was victorious. 1976

Finally
 Quintus Fabius,
 seeing that no
 Roman captain
 could conquer
 him, invented
 a new method
 of fighting by
 ambush and
 constant
 harassing,

But in this while, as seith myn auctour,
 Quynthus Fabius, subtil & deceyuable,
 Which was in Roome a famous dictatour,
 And he apparceyued* be toknes ful notable, 1980
 No Romeyn capteyn was in tho daies able,
 As it was shewed be experience,
 Geyn Hanybal to make resistance.°

Yit in his conceit he subtili gan serche; 1984
 To fynde a weie he dede his besi peyne,
 Day be day gan felli theron werche,
 Outher be fraude or sum compassid treyne
 To ligge await & secreli ordeyne 1988
 Enbushmentis to his auantages,
 Of Hanybal to stoppe the passages.

1959. hih] gret R. 1961. passid] om. R.

1972. lost he H.

1980. And he] Which H, R 3, H 5, P — apparceyued] apper-
 teyned B.

1984. Yit] But H — his] this R.

1985. he] om. H.

But al his treynys seruid hym of nouht;
 For Hanybal, this worthi Affrican,
 In his conquest so prudentli hath wrouht,
 So lik a prince & a knihtli man,
 Fro thilke tyme that he werris gan
 Ageyn the Romeyns, bothe on se & lond,
 That thei wer feeble his poweer to withstond.

1992 yet even he
 could accom-
 plish little; and
 the Romans
 became less
 and less
 able to
 withstand
 Hannibal's
 power.

This Quintus Fabius kept hym alway cloos, [p. 283]
 Liggyng await to falle on Hanyball;
 And of assent eek to his purpos
 Ther was oon Varo, manli & wis withal.
 And so thes tweyne in especial,
 Withynne Poile, a large gret contre,
 Fauht with Hanybal at Kannes the cite.

1996
 2000 Quintus Fabius,
 however, con-
 tinued his
 campaign,
 assisted by
 Varro;

As the stori maketh rehersaile,
 The Romeyn parti, of worthi werreious
 Wer fourti thousand slay[e]n in bataille:
 Emylius Paulus, thretti senatours,
 Twenti in noubre that hadde be pretours,
 And thre hundred capteyns of estat,
 Slayn be Hanybal in that mortal debat.

2004
 and they
 fought
 Hannibal at
 Cannæ

And bi the slauhtre of Emilius,
 The noble consul, Romeyns disespeired.
 And Hanybal, that day victorious,
 To his loggyng is ageyn repeired,
 His foon outraied & mortalli appeired,
 Knew no refut ageyn this manli kniht,
 But at myscheeff took hem to the fliht.

2012 and were again
 defeated.

The which[e] day, yiff that Hanybal
 Hadde hem folwed proudli to the toun,
 Bi the counseil of oon Marthabal,
 A manli kniht, a prince of hih renoun,
 He sholde haue had ful pocessioun
 That day of Roome, lik to his entente, —
 But I suppose Fortune list nat assente.

2020 But Hannibal
 failed to press
 home his
 victory and lost
 his chance of
 entering Rome.

In this processe, pleynli, as I reede,
 This Hanybal wex proud & riht pompous,
 Of foure victories dempte hymself in deede

2024
 He grew proud
 and indolent,

1991. his] thes R.

1997. feblee R. — poweer] prowess H, R 3, H 5.

2004. Cannas R, J, P, Cannes H 5, Cames H, Kannes R 3.

2011. be] with R. 2013. disepeired R.

2019. day] hanyball R. 2021. Mataball H. 2027. &] om. R.

- About al othir to be most glorious,
 Of his corage most inli surquedous.
 But, o alas, a litil slouthe & pride,
 For lak of pursut, his conquest set aside. 2032
- although during the course of the war he had slain so many Romans that three bushels filled with their gold rings were sent home to Carthage.
 Yit in his conquest, of knihtis that lay ded,
 Of consuleris old & yong of age,
 With senatours, the processe who list reed, 2036
 Slayn in the feeld[e] in that mortal rage,
 Duk Hanybal sente to Cartage,
 Of cleene gold, be record of writyngis,
 Out of the feeld thre busschel ful of ryngis. 2040
- Fortune now became unfavourable.
 Aftir foure victories heer remembrid,
 Bi and bi the processe, who list see,
 In which[e] many worthi was dismembrid,
 Bothe of Affrik & Roome the cite, 2044
 Abate gan the gret prosperite
 Of Hanybal be froward auenture:
 Set onys bak, hard fortune to recure.
- Wintering at Capua in great luxury,
 Aftir the flouris of his felicite,
 His noblesse drouh to declynacioun. 2048
 To Capue he wente, a myhti strong cite,
 Ther to soiourne, as maad is mencionn,
 Al the tyme of wyntres cold sesoun,
 Wher to his lust & bodili plesaunce, 2052
 Off al vitaille fond gret habundaunce.
- his soldiers lost much of their martial power through over-indulgence;
 Which made his knihtis slouh vnto the werre;
 For wyn, wommen and plente of vitaille
 Ful ofte sithe cause men to erre, 2056
 Make hem feeble ther enmyes to assaille: *
 Gorges agroteied, enboced ther entraille,
 Disposeth men rather to reste & slepe,
 Than of ther enmyes for to taken keepe. 2060
- and in the spring, when Hannibal purposed to lay siege to Rome, he was hindered by the rains,
 But whan wyntir with his frostis colde
 Was ouergon in thilke regioun,
 Hanybal gan his purpos holde, 2064
 To leyn a siege vnto Roome toun.
 But so gret reynys fill from heuen doun,
 So gret[e] tempest vpon eueri side,
 For the constreynt he myht[e] nat abide.
2031. o] om. H. 2036. in] on H.
 2047. his] hir H. 2049. Capua P.
 2057. to assaille] tassaille B, for tassaille H, R 3, H 5.
 2058. Egreteied H, engrosed R 3. 2066. vpon] om. R.

To fortifie, the said[e] Hanybal,
 Ageyn his enmyes wher he hadde a-doo,
 Sente lettres vnto Hastrubal,
 In riht gret haste for to come hym too.
 But Fortune hir wheel hath turnid so,
 That Hastrubal, wher he was loth or fayn,
 Be Salynator venquissed was & slayn.

Of which[e] myscheeff & disconfiture
 Hanybal gan dulle in his corage,
 Compleyned sore of this mysauenture,
 Knew no refut ageyn this mortal rage,
 Herd eek seyn that Affrik & Cartage
 Were of newe, to his confusioun,
 Strongli werreyed be worthi Scipioun.

Siphax also of Numedie kyng,
 Which ageyn Romeyns gan a werre make,
 Maugre his myht & al his fel werkyng
 Was bi force of Scipioun Itake,
 Wherthoruh his corage gretli gan a-slake.
 And how Cartage, cheeff of that regeoun,
 Beseged was also be Scipioun.

Thus Hanybal constreyned was of neede
 Hom to repeire for rescus off Cartage,
 And was also, in bookis as I reede,
 The same tyme falle ferre in age,
 And at myscheeff & gret disauantage
 Ageyn Scipioun ful lite[l] myht auaille,
 Bi whom he was sconfited in bataille.

Cartage constreynid of necessite,
 Them to submitte vnto Roome toun;
 And for ther mor hard aduersite,
 Gneus Seruilius was fro Rome sent doun,
 Onli of purpos for this conclusioun:
 For to procure in especiall
 Fynal destruccioun & deth off Hanyball.

Aftir al his marcial labours,
 His old felicite wex froward & vnmeete,
 In holuh images put al his tresours,

2068 and failed of
 his reinforce-
 ments, owing
 to the defeat
 and death of
 Hasdrubal.

2072

2076 This, together
 with the news
 that Scipio was
 attacking
 Carthage and
 had taken
 Syphax
 prisoner,
 2080 dulled his
 courage.

[p. 284]

2084

2088

2092 Compelled to
 return home
 to rescue his
 city, and grown
 old, he was
 beaten by
 Scipio;

2096 and after
 Carthage had
 surrendered,

2100

2104 he hid his
 wealth in hollow
 images and
 went to Crete,

2088. be] of H. 2095. scomfited H.

2099. Gneus] Cayus P — Seruilius] Geruilius R — fro rome was

H, R 3, H 5.

2103. And aftir R.

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Took his passage into the lond of Creete,
 Found* Fortune contrarie & vnsueete,
 Made officeris keepyn his richesse 2108
 In the temple of Diane the goddesse.

and afterwards
 to Prusias,
 king of
 Bithynia, who,
 threatened by
 the Romans,

Sumwhat for trust & parcer^eeeke for dreede,
 To fynde socour he wente [un]to the kyng
 Of Bithynye to helpe hym in his neede, 2112
 Callid Prusias; but of his komyng
 The slehti Romeyns hadde knowlechyng:
 To Bithynye doun ther lettres sente,
 "Yif Hanybal scape, eckon ye shal repente." 2116

laid siege to the
 fortress in which
 Hannibal had
 taken refuge.

The lettres radde, the kyng the same day
 Made his peeple besege the dongoun
 Wher duk Hanybal of truste allone lay. 2120
 Al destitut whan he knew this tresoun,
 Tescape his enmyes drank wilfulli poisoun,
 Ches rather so, sith othir escap was noon,
 Than in the handis to fallyn of his foon.

Hannibal, seeing
 that his position
 was hopeless,
 drank poison,
 praying the
 gods to take
 vengeance on
 Prusias.

Toform his deth[e] -aide this orisoun, 2124
 To alle the goddis leuoutli doun knelyng,
 That thei wolde of this fals tresoun
 Take vengeance on Prusias the kyng,
 Which was cause, bi his fals werkyng, 2128
 Of [the] destruccioun and the deth fynall
 Of this riht famous worthi Hanyball.

[Lenvoy.]

My pen quaked
 and my heart
 bled when I
 wrote this
 tragedy of
 Hannibal.

THIS tragedie froward to write or reede
 Of this forseid manli Hanyball, 2132
 My penne quook, myn herte I felte bleede,
 For to beholde the woful pitous fall
 Of hym that was the diffensable wall
 Of Cartage, the stronge myhti toun, 2136
 Which slouh hymself be drynkyng of poisoun.

2107. Found] And B, R, J, P.

2111. unto] to R, J, P. 2112. his] this H, R 3.

2116. ye] thai H.

2117. The] Thes H.

2120. this] his R.

2129. 1st the] om. H, R, R 3, H 5 — 2nd the] om. J, P.

2130. hastruball H.

It was to hym, he thouhte, mor manheede
 To slen hymselff be vengauce most mortall,
 Than his enmyes be constreynt sholde hym leede 2140
 In cheynys bounde, he to be [ther] thrall.
 So gret despiht he hadde of hem at all,
 That leuer he hadde, than bide in ther prisoun,
 To moordre hymself be drynkyng off poisoun. 2144

who thought it
 more manly
 to slay himself
 than to be
 thrall to his
 enemies.

As me seemeth, in this horrible deede
 He rassembled the furies infernal;
 Of cruel Pluto I trowe he took his meede,
 Voide off resoun, [he] becam bestiall.
 At whos terrible fes a funerall,
 Goddesse Proserpyna cam with manes doun,
 The same tyme whan he drank poisoun.
 Noble Princis, considreth & take* heede,
 Leuyng the surplus hys deedis marciall,
 Knihtli remembreth, & hath in herte hatreede
 Of his empoisonnyng in especiall,
 Abhomyable to God & man withal,
 That a prince so famous of renoun
 Sholde moordre hymself be drynkyng of poisoun.

It seems to me
 that he was like
 one of the
 Furies of the
 lower regions.
 He received his
 reward of Pluto.

2152 Noble Princes,
 remember that
 a self-inflicted
 death by poison
 is abominable to
 God and man.

2156

[How Prusias kyng of Bethenye betraied Hanybal
 and wolde haue disherite his sone & heir went a
 beggyng in straunge landys.]¹

FOLWYNG in ordre ther cam to Bochas
 Of Bithynye the grete myht[y] kyng,
 Which in his tyme was cal[li]d Prusias,
 Gretli slaundred & noised of o thyng,
 That he was fals & double in werkyng,
 Ageyn the noblesse of his estat roiall,
 Because that he betraished Hanyball.
 This defaute dirked the brihtnesse
 Of his fame & his knihtli renoun,
 And eclipsed his passid old prowesse
 Bi report in many a regeoun.
 Alas, that euer the condicioun
 Of doubilnesse bi falsnesse or feynnyng,
 Sholde be founde, a[nd] namli in a kyng!

Next followed
 Prusias, king
 of Bithynia,
 who betrayed
 Hannibal

2160

2164

[p. 285] and thereby
 darkened
 the brightness
 of his fame.

2168 Alas that
 treachery
 should ever be
 found in a
 king!

2172

2141. their] *om.* R. 2148. he] *om.* R, J.
 2150. be goddesse H. 2152. take] taketh B, J.
 2155. enpoisonnyng H.
 2162. slaundred] disclaundrid H, dyslandryd H 5.

¹ MS. J. leaf 116 recto.

This Prusias
had a son
called
Nicomedes,
whom he
purposed to
deprive of his
heritage

Off this Prusias ferther to proceede,
Which geyn Hanybal wrouhte this tresoun,
A sone he hadde callid Nichomeede,
Born to* been heir be iust successioun. 2176
But his fader bi fals collusioun
Purposed hym, for he was yong of age,
To putte hym out of his heritage.

because he had a
younger son by
a second wif.

In this mateer ther greuh up a gret striff 2180
Bi Prusias [a]geyn this Nichomeede,
Cause that he bi his seconde wiff
Hadde a yong sone, in bookis thus I reede,
Whom he purposeth to preferre in deede, 2184
For which he caste, bi short conclusioun,
Off Nichomeede the destruccioun.

And for tacomplisshe this froward fals mateer,
Bi ful gret deliberacioun 2188
Kyng Prusias gan shewen heuy cheer
Geyn Nichomeede, seekyng occasioun
To depryue hym off pocessioun,
Afftir his* day, bi sotil fals werkyng, 2192
In Bithynye he shal nat regne as kyng.

The people saw
what he was
about and stood
by Nicomedes,

The peeple seyng this gret iniquite
Wrouht bi the kyng geyn good[e] conscience,
Thoruh al the lond, of hih & louh degre, 2196
To Nichomeede, alle of o sentence,
Gaff ther good will and ther benivolence,
For eueri lord and eueri gret baroun
Stood hool with hym thoruh al the regioun. 2200

who was
crowned king
by just title;
and Prusias had
to beg for his
living in foreign
lands. Such is
the end of
treason and
deceit.

Thus bi iust title he was crowned kyng.
Prusias for shame & heuynesse
In straunge contrees lyued be beggyng,
Al desolat cried for almesse. 2204
Loo, heer the eende of tresoun & falsnesse! —
Laft* at myscheeff, myn auctour seith the same,
Of pouerte forsook his owne name.

Prusias suffered
both for his
injustice to
Nicomedes and
his treachery to
Hannibal.

Seeth heer too thynges, & taketh riht good heede, 2208
Of Prusias thunwar sodeyn myschaunce,
The disherityng doon to Nychomeede,

2176. to] be B. 2181. geyn J, R, H, R 3, H 5.
2187. for] om. H, R 3, P. 2192. his] this B, R, P.
2194. gret] om. H. 2199. 1st eueri] euer R.
2200. the] pat R. 2206. Laft] Last B. 2209. chaunce H.

Aftir folwyng on hym the grete vengauce,
 As the stori put in remembrance,
 For tresoun doon odible & mortal
 Ageyn the forseid famous Hanybal.

2212

[Ho[w] Persa of Macedoyne kyng that enpoisoned
 his* brothir/ was bi Emylyus outraied & deied
 in prisoun.]¹

BESPREYNT with teris, pitousli weping,
 As Bochas sat in his studie allone,
 Next cam Persa, of Macedoyne kyng,
 And mortalli he gan sihhe & grone
 And furiously for to make his mone,
 That he whilom was of so hih renoun,
 Constreyned afftir to deien in prisoun.

2216

Persa, king of
 Macedonia,
 appeared
 sighing and
 groaning
 before Bochas,
 for, in spite
 of his great
 renown, he died
 in prison.

2220

This said[e] Persa of nature was froward,
 Eucl disposed eek of condicioun.
 Thouh he of berthe was but a bastard,
 He compassid bi fals collusioun
 Afftir his fader to haue pocessioun,
 As myn auctour remembreth be writyng,
 Of Macedoyne to be crowned kyng.

2224

He was evil-
 disposed and a
 bastard, and in
 order to be-
 come king

2228

His fader Phelipp, the stori tellith thus,
 Hadde a sone which was yong of age,
 Wis & redi, callid Demetrius,
 Born & begete treuli in mariage.
 But Persa caste bi furious outrage
 Hym to deströie & moordre be poisoun,
 He of that kyngdam to haue pocessioun,—

2232

procured the
 death of his
 young brother
 Demetrius, the
 rightful heir,

Falsli compassed* to his auauntage,
 In his entent Demetrius to depriue
 Of Macedoyne, which was his heritage.
 And therupon he lettres gan contryue
 To preeue hym tre[i]tour whil he was alyue.
 Wherof kyng Phelipp gretli was annoyed,
 That he & Persa sholde be destroyed

2236

by telling Philip,
 his father, that
 he was a
 traitor.

2240

2217. Persa] Persius P.

2219. furiously R. 2220. hih] gret R.

2222. Persius P. 2224. he of berthe] of birth he H.

2236. compassed] compasseth B.

2237. his] this H. 2240. on live H.

2241. annoyed] Enioied H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 116 recto; his is repeated.

- Philip then
caused
Demetrius to be
slain by poison. Be Demetrius, that thouhte no damage,
Mente non harm in his oppynyoun; 2244
Yit his fader, suspecious of corage,
As* Persa gaff hym fals enformacioun,
Made hym be slayn be drynkyng of poisoun
Vpon a day, a thyng abhomynable, 2248
Sittyng at mete at his fadris table.
- Afterwards when
he knew the
truth he died
of grief, and
Persa usurped
the crown, Kyng Phelipp aftir, whan he knew the trouthe,[p.286]
Hadde of his deth[e] gret compassioun,
But al to late; & that was ful gret routhe. 2252
Which caused aftir his owne destruccioun, —
For sorwe deide; and of presumpcioun,
Persa afftir, falsli vsurpyng,
In Macedoyne was c[o]rownid kyng. 2256
- and, allyng
himself with
Greece and
Thrace, began
a war against
Rome. With dyuers contrees made his alliaunce,
In Grece, &* Trace gat freendes nih & ferre,
And of pride & wilful gouernaunce
Caste with Romeyns for to holde werre. 2260
Vn grace & youthe made hym for to erre,
Til a consul sente fro Roome toun
Brouhte this Persa to destruccioun.
- Æmilius was
sent against
him, and
before the
battle, seeing
his daughter
weep, Callid Emilius was this consuleur, 2264
Sent ageyn Persa to haue a gret bataille.
Seyng his douhtir heuy of hir cheer,
Whan he wente oute his enmyes to assaille,
Made vnto hire this vnkouth apposaille: 2268
“Whi weepe ye so? What thyng doth you greeue,
At my departyng takyng of me leue?”
- discovered
that it was
for her whelp
called Persa,
which had just
died; and this
her father felt
sure was a
good omen. “Fader,” quod she, “& ye taken heed,
A whelp I hadde that dede me gret plesaunce, 2272
Callid Persa, the which riht now is ded,
And this cheef cause onli of my greuaunce.”
Hir fader thanne gan chaungen contenaunce:
“This a tokne, to myn encres of glorie, 2276
That I of Persa shal hauen the victorie.”

2246. As] And B, R, J, P — Persius P.
2256. coronid] crownid H, R, J, R 3, P, corownyd H 5.
2258. &] in B, R, J, R 3, H 5 — frendis gat H.
2262. fro] to R.
2266. heuy] om. H. 2268. opposaille H.
2272. me] om. R, J.
2273. Persius P. 2274. this] thes R.

In Macedoyne he & Persa mette,
 And quit hym ther lik a manli kniht,
 Conquereth the lond, non myht[e] hym *witbsette*, 2280
 And manli putte Persa to the fliht;
 Afftir to Trace he took the weie riht.
 Of which[e] conquest short processe to make,
 With his too sonys Persa was ther take. 2284

Æmilius put
 Persa to flight
 and took him
 prisoner

Emelius aftir this victorie
 Axeth the tryumphe vnto his guerdoun;
 And as it is remembred in historie,
 Persa folweth his* char thoruh Rome toun, 2288
 Condemned aftir to deien in prisoun.
 The which[e] deth he dede weel disserue,
 For he be poisoun made his brother sterue.

and received the
 triumph.
 Persa after-
 wards died in
 prison and
 richly deserved
 his fate, because
 he had poisoned
 his brother.

Thus can Fortune, erli & eek late,
 Doun from hir wheel & hir hih[e] stage
 Of proude princis the surquedie abate.
 Whan to hir lust she seeth most auauantage,
 She frowardli can turnen hir visage, 2292
 And sodenli thestat of hem consume,
 Aboue ther offis that wrongli list presume. 2296

Fortune is
 always able
 to curb the
 pride of princes
 when they
 presume above
 their office,

¶ Amongis which, a kyng of Israel,
 Ageyn the presept and lawe of Moises,
 Callid Ozias, the Bible kan weel tel,
 Of presumpcioun wilful & rek[e]lles,
 To sacrefise put hymself in pres,
 Lik a bisshop in the temple arraied;
 But or he passid he gretli was affraied,

as did Azariah,
 who went into
 the temple
 dressed as a
 bishop and
 demanded to be
 allowed to make
 sacrifice,

Lost his speche, [and] smet with meselrie
 Duryng his lyff: loo, heer a gret vengauunce! —
 Off his crowne & his regalie 2300
 Inpotent to vse the gouernaunce,
 Parcel for pride & disobeissaunce;
 For he list nat meekli the lawe obeie,
 For which at myscheef he dede a lepre deie. 2304

for which he
 lost his spech
 and died a leper.

2278. Persius P.

2288. his] aftir his B, R.

2292. can] cam R.

2295. lust] lyst R.

2299. Isrell H.

2306. and] om. R, J, P, R 3, H 5.

2309. Inpotent H.

[How Amonyus a prince of Antioche delityng in
pillage and robbery, with other vicious lyuyng,
fledde in womannes wede aftir taken and slayn.]¹

Ammonius, a
great warrior,
prince of
Antioch, robbed
the rich and
spoiled the poor,

NEXT in ordre, compleynyng his distresse,
Cam Amonyus, a notable werreiour,
To Iohn Bochas to shewe his heuynesse,
In Antioche prince & governour.

2316

Of which contre whil he was pocessour,
Hadde in custum, & this was his trauaile,
To robbe the riche & spoille the poraile.

and spared
neither young
nor old. As he
cared for
nothing but
women and
drink,

Spared nouthur old nor yong off age,
Took fro marchaunter tresour & richesse,
And in delites* of lecherous outrage*
Was al his lust, with wach & dronkenesse.
Will in his court of resoun was maistresse,
Causyng the peeple thoruh al the regioun
To rise ageyn hym bi rebellioun.

2320

2324

his subjects
rose against
him, and he
fled dressed
as a woman,
and when
caught swore
that he was
one.

Contrarie he was to al good disciplyne;
The peeple aros ageyn hym on a day,
And he for feer, in habite femynyne,
Lik a wrechch fledde cowardli away.
Take at myscheeff, was made no delay,
Falsli confessed*, heeryng many a man,
Ageyn nature that he was a woman.

2328

2332

But the
people found
out the truth,
and killed him.
Fortune well
knows how to
punish those
who will not
follow virtue;

Thé trouthe knowe and the sclaudre riff, [p. 287]
Alle of assent the peeple Antiocheene
Ros attonys; and so he loste his lyff,
Thei wer so woode ageyn hym in ther teene.
Thus of Fortune the chaunge is alwey seene,
Fro bet to wers she can so weel transmue
Thestat of them that wil no vertu sue.

2336

2340

[How Andrisus of lowe birth born hauyng no title
of Macedoyne kyng was taken and deied in
prisoun.]²

but she is to
blame when
she sets an
unknown boy
on a throne by
error, as
happened to
Andrisus,

BVT of o thyng Fortune is to blame,
That she is so chaungable of corage,
To sette a boy, vnknowe of birthe & fame,
Bi fals errorr upon a roial stage:

2344

2314. Anonyus R. 2320. age] ages R, J.

2322. delices B, J — outrage] outrages B, J, R.

2332. confessed] confessyng B, R, J, P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 116 verso.

² MS. J. leaf 117 recto.

For oon Andriscus bi surquedous outrage,
 Withoute title, be subtil compassyng,
 Of Macedoyne took on hym to be kyng.

Colour was non his cleym to make stable,
 Except that he of cheer & off visage
 Was to kyng Phelipp of fetures most semblable,
 Wherbi the peepel in ther furious rage
 Cauhte oppynyoun, of wilful fals dotage,
 Ageyn resoun, [as] Bochas doth descryue,
 That kyng Phelipp was rise fro deth to lyue,

2348 who had no
 other claim
 to Macedon
 than that he
 looked like
 King Philip,
 Persa's father.

2352

Whilom fadir to Persa, as I tolde.
 And for Andriscus, brouht up in wrechchidnesse,
 In presence both of yong & old
 Was bold to cleyme be title of rihtwisnesse,
 Shewyng no ground but personel liknesse,
 Mokkyng the peepel, which bi ther fauour
 Of roial dignite resceyueth the honour.

2356 The people
 thought that
 Philip had
 risen from the
 dead; and as
 Andriscus was
 egged on by
 others, he took
 possession of
 the throne.

2360

Thus he that was fostred as a wrech
 In miserie and eek in pouerte,
 Fro poore bed his hornis dede up strechche
 To holde a sceptre of kyngli dignite.
 And bi the support of the comounte
 He gan wexe pompous and elat, —
 Brouht up of nouht, whan he stood in estat.

2364 Afterwards, as
 was to be
 expected, he
 became puffed
 up with pride;

2368

Nothyng mor cruel, nor nothyng more vengable,
 Nor mor hasti to execucioun,*
 Nor mor deynous, nor mor vntretable,
 Than whan a beggere hath domynacioun:
 A curre mor froward than a strong leoun.
 And semblabli, non so gret cruelte
 As whan a wrech is set in dignite.

2372 for nothing is
 more cruel and
 supercilious
 than a wretch
 set in dignity.
 A cur is more
 impudent than
 a lion.

This Andriscus in his roial chaieer,
 Texecute his hatful cruelte
 Gadred peepel in contres ferr & neer
 In Macedoyne; & of old enmyte
 Began maligne geyn Roome the cite.
 But to withsette his froward fals entent,
 Oon Iuenciuss, a pretour, was doun sent.

2376 He began
 to malign
 against Rome.

2380

2353. as] *om.* R.

2354. rise] *rysen* R. 2355. to] of R. 2358. be] his H.

2370. execucioun] *doo execucioun* B, *do execucioun* R, J, P.

2378. peeplis H. 2380. ageyn H. 2381. fals] *om.* R.

2382. Iuuentus P.

Juventus, a
pretor, was
sent against
him and
defeated,
because of his
vainglory.

But because that he was negligent,
And of despiht[e] took of hym non heede, 2384
He was outraied, & bi Andriscus shent,
With al the peepke that he dede leede.
But the Romeyns, of hope bet to speede,
Han sent Metellus, a ful manli kniht, 2388
To Macedoyne to meete [hym] anon riht.

Metellus then
set on him
and took him
prisoner to
Rome.

This worthi man list nat longe tarie,
Set proudli on in hope it sholde auaille,
Made Macedoyne to Roome tributarie, 2392
Took Andriscus manli in bataille,
Brouht hym to Roome *with* myhti apparaille,
And made hym lyn fetrid in prisoun
For his outraious fals presumpcioun. 2396

Thus he was
chastised for
being proud and
disdainful in
his prosperity.

Thus for his froward vsurpacioun,
That he was hawteyn in his prosperite,
Knew nat hymselff thoruh fals abusioun, 2400
Blent with a myst of blynd felicite,
List nat remembre of his first pouerte,
Whom to chastise Fortune brouht[e] lowe,*
Because he list nat hymselfen for to knowe.

[How Alisaundre ballas kyng of Surre for extor-
cioun pride and vnkyndenesse deied atte mis-
cheef.]¹

There was once
a kyng of
Syria called
Alexander
Balas.

THUS kan this ladi pleyen hir paient 2404
Bi a maner of deynous mokerie,
Hir entermes forth serue hem of entent,
To folk that truste hir onli of folie. .
And to purpos, — whilom of Surrie 2408
Ther was a kyng, lik as writ Bochas,
Callid Alisaundre, whos surname was Ballas.

After Antiochus
Eupator was
set aside

Of which Ballas to telle the processe,
First of his risyng & aftir of his fall: 2412
Anthiochus, the stori berth witnesse,

2389. hym] *om.* R, P.

2396. fals] *fell* H. 2398. his] *hih* H.

2399. fals] *his fals* H. 2402. lowe] *hym lowe* B.

2404. pleyn R.

2408. of] *in H, R 3, H 5 — Surrie]* *sutrie* R. 2409. as] *a* H.

2410. was] *is* H. — whos surname was Ballas] but truly Prom-
palas P.

2411. Ballas] *Prompalus* P.

¹ MS. J. leaf 117 recto.

- Callid Eupater, which in especial
 Cleymed title to thestat roiall,
 Afftir his fader named Anthiochus
 Epiphanes, the stori tellith thus. 2416
- Afftir whos deth the kyngdam of Surrye
 Sholde longe be successioun
 To Eupater; & eek for his partie
 Demetrius, hostage in Roome toun,
 Cleymed a title to* that regeoun
 Of Surrye, because Epiphanes
 Was brothir* to hym, this stori is no les. 2420
- Demetrius fro Roome is come doun
 Into Surrye to cleyme his heritage,
 Resceyueth the crowne [&] took pocessioun,
 Gan wexe proud, presumptuous of corage. 2424
 Thus Eupater, that was but yong of age,
 Excludid was in Surrie to succeede.
 Of Demetrius ferther thus I reede: 2428
- Outraious he was aboue mesure,
 Riht vengable & ful of cruelte,
 Hatful also to eueri creature,
 And heuy born of worthi kynges thre;
 First in Egipt of worthi Tholome,
 And off Attilius in Asie tho regnyng,
 And Arirarches in Capadoce kyng,— 2432
- Alle of assent ageyn hym han conspired,
 Fond a weie Demetrius to depryue,
 His vndoing so sore thei ha[ue] desired.
 And ther entent texecute blyue,
 Thei gan a fable of purpos to contryue,
 As ye shal heere, togidre as thei wente,
 To which al Surrye attonys dede assente. 2436
- Thei took a galaunt born of lough lynage,
 Callid Ballas, of ther aqueyntaunce,
 And affermede, al of o corage,
 How he was sone & iust heir in substaunce
 To Epiphanes, & next heir in alliaunce,
 To succeede, bi toknis affermyng,
 Next in Surrye to be crownid kyng. 2440
2422. to] in B, R, J. 2424. brothir] brouht B.
 2427. &] om. R. 2436. worthi] gret H, R 3.
 2437. Attilius] Actilius J, R 3, Attalus P.
 2438. Ariarathes P. 2447. Ballas] Prompalus (througout) P.
- [p. 288] by Demetrius, a
 brother of
 Epiphanes,
 Demetrius grew
 proud and
 presumptuous
 and behaved so
 outrageously
 that all men
 hated him.
 Ptolemy,
 Attalus
 and Ariarthes
 conspired
 against him
 and,
 taking a low-
 born youth
 named Balas,
 maintained
 that he was
 the son of
 Epiphanes and
 rightful heir to
 the throne.

They called
him Alexander
and made him
king in spite
of Demetrius.
First beaten by
Demetrius, he
afterwards
overcame him;

Alisaundre of purpos thei hym calle,
Because thei thouhte of persone he was able;
Set hym up in his roiall stall,
Maugre Demetrius, cruel & vengable.
And Fortune was to them fauourable,
Made ther purpos fynalli tauaille,
With whom Demetrius hadde a gret bataille.

2456

This Alisaundre, which namyd was Ballas,
Be Demetrius, as put is in memorie,
First ouercome; but* aftir fill this caas,
He of Demetrie hadde the victorie,
An[d] to encres of his roial glorie,
Of fortune be sodeyn auenture
Ballas the feeld dede on hym recure.

2460

but as soon as
he was crowned
king he became
a tyrant and
was ungrateful
to his
benefactors.

Thus be promocioun of thes kynges thre,
Whan he was crownid kyng of al Surrye,
To fals extorsioun & hatful cruelte
This Alisaundre his wittis dede applie,
To robberyng, pillage and eek tyrannye,
And despised, shortli to conclude,
The said[e] kynges of ingratitude.

2468

He no longer
knew himself,
and married
Cleopatra,
Ptolemy's
daughter,

He hadde forget his staat of pouerte,
Knew nat hymself, of fals ambicioun
Weddid* the douhtir of myhti Tholome,
Callid Cleopatra, as maad is mencion.
And al his labour in conclsioun
Was onli this, in Bochas as I reede,
Al the kyngdam[ys] aboute hym to posseede.

2476

2480

and coveted all
the kingdoms
about him.
Finally he
made war on
the three
kings.

Who al coueiteth, sumtyme al doth leese;
Oon ageyn alle hath seelde souereynte.
And for Ballas frowardli gan* cheese
To holde werre with kyng Tholome,
And with the forseid worthi kynges thre,
Alle off assent[e] haue such weies souht,
That be ther werkyng he was brouht to nouht.

2484

Ptolemy took
his wife away
from him and
gave her to
one Demetrius,

First Tholome from hym took his wiff,
Cleopatra, & gaf hir in mariage
To oon Demetrie, causyng ful gret striff,

2488

2461. Demetrius] Detryus H.

2462. ouercomen B, J — but] & B, R, J, and P.

2467. be] om. H.

2476. Weddid] Weddith B, R, J, R 3.

2480. kyngdam R. 2483. gan] can B.

For he that tyme was but yong of age;
But Ballas aftir, be ful gret outrage,
With al his poweer, gadred nih & ferre,
Geyn Demetrie gan to holde werre.

2492

Togidre mette proudli in bataille,
Ballas constreyned cawardli to flee;
And whan he sauh his poweer dide faile,
In Arabie, a myhti strong contre,
Zabidus, a prince of gret pouste,
Took hym be force, he quakyng in his dreed,
To kyng Tholome sent anon his hed.

2496

whom Balas
attacked, but
was forced to
flee to Arabia,
where he was
slain and his
head sent to
Ptolemy.

2500

Men may too thynges considren in this caas: [289]
Pride pun[y]shed and vnkyndenesse,
And presumpcioun, in this man Ballas,
Withoute title or cleym of rihtwysnesse
Maad kyng of Surrie, set in gret worthynesse.
What was his eende? ye get no mor of me, —
His hed smet of & sente to Tholome.

2504

2508

Lenvoye.

THIS tragedie doth naturalli compleyne
Vpon this vice callid vnkyndenesse,
Which to pun[y]she is torment non nor peine,
Rigour condigne, flagelle nor duresse,
Enprisownyng nor non erthli distresse,
That may suffise, breeffli to conclude,
Ageyn the vice of ingratitude.

No punishment
is too severe
for ingratitude.

2512

Alle creaturis on this vice compleyne,
Lawe, nature decrees rihtwysnesse;
This monstre in kynde doth the liht desteyne,
Of eueri vertu dirketh the brihtnesse.
Alisaundre can bern herof witnesse,
Which to his foorthris, he of techchis rude
Shewe[d] ageynward gret ingratitude.

2516

It darkens the
brightness of
every virtue.

2520

2498. contre] Cite H.

2500. *This line is replaced by the next to last of preceding stanza H.*

2521. fortheris R, H 5, forthereres H, J, furthers P — of] of
his R, J.

The treble
chain of
Cerberus, the
hunger and
thirst of
Tantalus, the
torments of
Ixion and
Typhon, were
insufficient to
chastise those
who are
ungrateful to
their old
friends.

Noble Princes,
do not allow
ungrateful folk
to approach
you; no vice
is more hateful
than theirs.

Of Herberus thynfernal treble cheyne,
Nor of Tantalus hunger nor thrustnesse, 2524
Of Ixion or Ticius, bothe tweyne,
Rekne the[r] turment, remembre ther sharpnesse;
Al wer to lital to chastise or redresse
The hatful vice of them that can delude 2528
Ther freendis olde bi fals ingratitude.
Noble Princis, which in your demeyne
Han gouernaunce of al worldli richesse,
Geyn folk vnkynde looke that ye disdeyne, 2532
Suffre* hem nat haue non interesse
For taproche to your hih noblesse;
For ther is no vice mor hatful to conclude,
Than is the vice of ingratitude. 2536

[Here Bochas writeth of the rebellions and sedi-
cions in Rome, betwixt Tribunys and comouns.] ¹

I must now
write about
Caius and
Tiberius
Gracchus, who
were authors of
great seditions
in Rome.

FOLWYNG myn auctour in stories mervelious,
I mut now write the strong rebellious
Of Gaivs first & of Tiberius,
And of ther grete hatful sediciouns 2540
Meued in Roome tween tribuns & comouns;
And bi ther stryues how thei gan conspire
For tatteyne falsli to thempire.

Caius was
made tribune
in the Roman
year 600,

The yeer sixe hundred be computacioun, 2544
Gayus Graccus maad tribun in that age,
Aftir the cites first fundacioun,
Which turnyd aftir to ful gret damage
Of comoun proffit; for bi the* mortal rage, 2548
Tumulte & noise of comouns in the toun,
Caused a gret part of ther destruccioun.

and by his
equal
division of the
public lands
between rich
and poor he
caused
dissensions
among the
people.

For in departyng of chaumpayne heritages
Atwen the worthi & poore of the cite 2552
Bi egal porciouns, Graccus with fair langages
Hadde gretli meued al the* comounte.
Bi which occasioun, in stori men may see,
Anothir Graccus, callid the secounde, 2556
Was slayn in Roome & lowe leid on grounde.

2523. Cerberus H. 2524. thrustynesse H.
2526. 2nd ther] the R, J. 2533. Suffre] Suffreth B, J.
2535. to] om. R.
2540. ther] the R. 2548. the] ther B, R, J. 2551. *This stanza is transposed with the next R.* 2554. the] ther B, R.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 recto.

¶ Aftir this deth of Graccus, as I reede,
Was chose a tribun callid Munycius,
Which fordede the lawes alle in deede
Of olde Graccus callid[e] Gayus.
But he that was named Tiberius,
With help of Flaccus, tribuns of estat,
In the Capitoile began a gret debat.

2560 After the death
of the second
Gracchus,
Caius' laws
were repealed
by Mancinus,
and Tiberius
and Flaccus
revolted,

Thei wer supported bi the comounte,
Bi vois of peep[le], the woord of no man knowe;
For Graccus parti hih upon a tre
A trompet stood & proudli gan to blowe,
Which slay[e]n was, & fro the tre doun throwe,
Bi which[e] slauhtre, the book makth rehersaile,
Graccus* wex feeble; his parti gan to faille:

2564

supported by
the commons,
but were forced
to flee.

For dreed he fledde into the teritorie
Of Ianus temple, ran up to a tour.
Whan Tiberius, as put is in memorie,
Sauh in the cite he hadde no fauour,
Disespereid knew no bet socour,
Sword set at brest [in] presence of Mynerue,
Fulli purposed afforn hir for to sterue.

2572

Tiberius took
refuge in the
temple of
Minerva;

Ther stood on bi & drouh his hand abak;
Fro that purpos made hym to declyne.
Thus Graccus parti goth day be day to wrak,
And Flakkus took the temple of Lucyne, —
His sone, his freendis [&] almost al his lyne, —
Thei kept them strong; but maugre þer diffence
Thei wer ther slayn be sturdi violence.

2576

and Flaccus and
his party be-
took themselves
to the temple
of Lucina,
where they
were slain.

Whil Graccus freendis fauht for his partie, [p. 290]
And he hymself constreyned was for* dreed
To preye a boy of his cumpanye,
To take a suerd & smyte[n] of his hed.
Set on a spere with the blood maad red,
Sent it his mooder, compleynyng in hir teene,
Into hir castel that callid was Misseene.

2588

Gracchus
prayed a boy
among his
followers to
smite off his
head, which he
did.

2592

2559. Minucius P. 2560. lawes] lawe H, law R 3.

2566. vois] noise H, noyse R 3, H 5 — woord] voice H, vois R 3, voice P.

2569. tre] gree H.

2571. Graccus] Flaccus B, R, J, R 3, P. Flaccus is corrected to Gracchus in H.

2577. brest] the brest R, H — in] om. R, H, J, H 5.

2582. temple] peep[le] H.

2585. ther] om. H — sturdi] study R. 2587. for] of B, R, J.

Thus his
mother Cornelia
lost all her
children, and
their goods
were escheated
to the town.

Namyd Cornelia his moder was in deede,
Whilom douhtir to grete Scipioun.

Hir children alle slay[e]n, as I reede,

And Graccus goodis achetid to the toun. 2596

Therof afftir maad a dyuysioun

Bi iugement thoruhout[e] the cite,

Wher most was neede among the comounte.

502 of Grac-
chus' people
were slain and
2000 of Flaccus'
party, of whom
many were in-
nocent.

Of Graccus side fyue hundred slayn & twain* 2600

Vpon an hill[e] callid Auentyne.

And Oppynyus, a consul, dede his peyne

Of ther conspiryng the ground to serche & myne.

And Flaccus parti to brynge to ruyne, 2604

He slouh too thousand bi hasti iugement,

Amongis which was many an innocent.

[How the wif of Hastrubal brent hirsilf & hir
childre.]¹

John Bochas
again tells about
the destruction
of Carthage,

HEEER Iohn Bochas in especial
List to remembre how Cartage newe ageyn 2608

Destroied was, & how [duc] Hasdruball

Cam to myscheeff; the trouthe was weel seyn.

Which to reherse of newe it wer but veyn,

Sith heer-toforn is maad cleer mencion 2612

Bothe of ther brennyng & ther destruccioun.

and says that
Hasdrubal's
wife preferred
death to servi-
tude and burnt
herself up to-
gether with her
young sons.

Sauff heer he tellith how Hastruballis wiff,

Onli teschewen to lyuen in seruage,

Ches with hir childre for to lese hir lyff, 2616

And wilfulli, of furious corage,

She and hir sonys, tendre & yong of age,

Among the flawmys & the colis rede

Consumyd were* into assches dede. 2620

Dido, whom
Æneas betrayed,
built the city,
and she too
burnt herself
up.

Dido the firste that bilte that cite

And made touris & the stronge wall,

Which was betrasshed falsly* of Enee,

Afforn remembred the fires funerall, — 2624

And aftir longe the wif of Hasdruball

Ches rather deie with hir childre tweyne,

Than among Romeyns for to lyue in peyne.

2600. twain] fyue B, R. 2605. too] too tho H.
2609. duc] om. R, J — Hasdruball] Hanyball H, R 3.
2615. to] & H. 2618. yong & tendre H.
2620. were] was B, R, J. 2621. 2nd that] be H, R 3.
2623. falsly] also B, R, J.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 verso.

[Off Machabeus Ioathas taken bi the kyng of Surre.]¹

IN order suyng, vnto Iohn Bochas
 Ther appeered an heuy man of siht,
 Machabeus the worthi Ioathas,
 Whiche ocupied for wisdam & for myht
 Offis of prynce, [of] preesthod & of kniht;
 Be title of Iuda of werris took themprise,
 Be cleyrn of Leuy, as preest dede sacrefise.

2628 Jonathan Mac-
 cabeus, prince
 and high priest
 of Judea,

2632

The lawe of Iewes manli to diffende
 With al the Lond[e] of Promyssioun,
 This Ioathas ful knihtli dede entende
 Ageyn al enmyes aboute hem enviroun.
 Til of Surrye the fals[e] kyng Tryphoun
 Be treynys compassed & promys falsli holde
 Took Ioathas, of whom riht now I tolde.

2636 was taken
 prisoner by the
 deceit of Try-
 phon, king of
 Syria.

2640

Machabeorum is rehersid all,
 Of his knihthod & his worthynesse,
 With al the tresouns in especiall
 Wrouht be Tryphon be many gret falsnesse:
 His subtil sleyhtis and his doubilnesse, —
 Them to reherse, ye gete no mor of me;
 For in the Bible the stori ye may see.

2644 As the whole
 story is told
 in the Book of
 I. Maccabees,
 you'll get no
 more of it
 from me.

2648

[How Demetrius the secounde lost at last his hede.]²

BV T I will turne to Demetrius
 That callid was Demetrius þe secounde,
 Which bi descent cam from Anthiochus,
 And bi his manhod, as it was weel founde,
 Dedede the pride of kyng Ballas confounde,
 Callid Alisaundre, which bi gret outrage
 Hadde putte his fader from his heritage.

2652 Demetrius the
 Second, a de-
 scendant of An-
 tiochus, who
 confounded the
 pride of Balas,

This Demetrius, famous & notable,
 Vpon Parthois hadde many gret victorie,
 Til kyng Arsacides, double and deceyuable,
 Hymself delityng gretli in veynglorie,

2656 won many
 victories over
 the Parthians,
 but was finally
 captured by
 Arsaces.

2636. Promyssioun] punyssioun H. 2637, 41. Ionathas H.
 2659. veynglorie] victorie H.

¹ MS. J. leaf 118 verso.

² MS. leaf J. 118 verso.

Bi his sleiht fraudis deceptorie, 2660
Vndir a shadwe of feynyng & fals cheer
Took Demetrius vnwarli prisioneer.

Arsaces, to his
shame, after
leading him
about Syria in
poor array,
made him
marry his
daughter against
his will.

And to gret sclandre & hyndryng* of his name,
Arsacides bamaner moquerye 2664
Made Demetrius, for despiht & shame,
Poorli arraied, of hate & gret envie
For to be lad thoruhout al Surrye;
Made hym aftir, bi gret auisement, 2668
To wedde his douhtir ageyn his owne entent.

When Arsaces
died, Demetrius
tried to escape

This Demetrius was kept out of pres, [p. 291]
That but fewe hadde of hym [a] siht,
Vnto tyme that Arsacides 2672
Was ded & passed, for al his gret[e] myht.
Than he caste tescape away be fliht;
And secreli tacomplisshe his entent,
He gat hym counsail that was of his assent. 2676

in disguise, with
the help of a
knight called
Callimandrus;

Gallymandrus, a lord of that contre,
Which that was of his assent in deede,
In ther fliht to keepe hem mor secre 2680
Made Demetrius for to chaunge his weede,
And preuy weies foorth he dede hym leede.
But al for nouht; his fliht was but in veyn,
For bi strong pursut he was take ageyn.

but he was
caught and
brought back
to his wife.
After their two
children were
born, his chain
was again
loosened,

Aftir bi constreynt presentid to the kyng, 2684
That he gan wexe weri of his lyff,
Kept mor streihtli, folk on hym waityng,
And maugre hym presentid to his wiff,
With hir tabide ful heuy and pensyff. 2688
But whan thei hadde childre atween hem tweyne,
To go mor large loosnyd was his cheyne.

and three times
he endeavoured
to escape.

And thus he hadde space & fre licence
To gon and comen at his auauntage; 2692
For whil his wiff heeld with hym residence,
Thei dempte his childre wer suffisaunt hostage.
But he was euere vnstable of his corage,
With Gallymandrus the forseid[e] kniht 2696
Thre tyme take & brouht ageyn be fliht.

2663. hyndryng & sclandryng B, R, J.

2671. a] om. R, J. 2677. Callimandrus P.

2679. mor] om. H. 2686. awaityng H. 2689. children R.

And for he was so dyuers manyfold,
 Kyng Fraactes, in tokne he was vnstable,
 Sent hym thre dees forgid squar of gold,
 To pleye raket as a child chaungable, —
 His disposicioun was so variable.
 But for to restreyne his condicioun,
 He was efft take & fetrid in prisoun.

But whan Fortune hadde youen hym a pull,
 Bi many dyuers stra[u]nge aduersite,
 To punshe hym mor Pharactes wexeth dull.
 And Demetrius of prisoun was maad free,
 Ful restored ageyn to his contre,
 Wex proud ageyn, of newe it is so fall,
 That he was hated of his lieges all.

Cleopatra, his mooder, that was queen
 Of al Egipt & wiff to Tholome,
 Was with hir lord at striff, who list to seen,
 Which turnid aftir to gret aduersite.
 But to strengthe hir parti thus wrouht she,
 Made hir sone for to take on honde
 For hir to fihte ageyn[es] hir husbonde.

But Tholomeus callid Euergetes,
 Geyn Demetrius diffendyng his contre,
 Made Zebenna to putte hymself in pres,
 Sone of a marchaunt, born of low degre,
 To make a cleyrn bi fals subtilite,
 Of al Surrye to haue pocessioun,
 For hym aleggyng title of adopcioun.

He to be sone to [old] Anthiochus,
 Cleymyng therbi the kyngdam of Surrye,
 Onli texclude the said Demetrius.
 And Tholomeus, to susteene the partie
 Of Zebenna, with al his cheualrie
 Gadrid in Egipt & contrees enviroyn,
 Ageyn Demetrius proudli is come doun.

And Fortune with hir double face
 Caused the cuntre bi rebelloun,
 That Demetrius stood cleene out of grace;
 Werbi the peple of al that regeoun

King Phraates,
 seeing that he
 was as full
 of whims as a
 child, sent him
 three gold dice
 to play racket
 with and locked
 him up.

2704

But afterwards
 not wanting to
 punish him any
 more, he let
 him out, at
 which Deme-
 trius became so
 insufferable
 that all his
 subjects hated
 him.

2712

Cleopatra, his
 mother, was at
 strife with her
 husband Euer-
 getes, and in-
 duced
 Demetrius to
 take her side,
 whereupon
 Euergetes in-
 cited Zebina,
 son of a mer-
 chant, to lay
 claim to his
 kingdom, and,
 supporting him
 with an army,

2724

2728